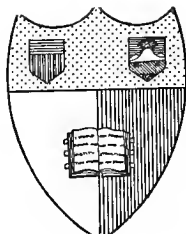


The Romance  
of the  
Men of Devon

FRANCIS GRIBBLE



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THE ROMANCE  
OF THE MEN OF DEVON

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*Photo Chandler, Exeter*

EXETER CATHEDRAL  
WEST FRONT

THE ROMANCE  
OF  
THE MEN OF DEVON

BY  
FRANCIS GRIBBLE  
AUTHOR OF  
"THE ROMANCE OF THE OXFORD COLLEGES"

WITH 17 ILLUSTRATIONS

MILLS AND BOON, LIMITED  
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## PREFACE

EVERY Devonian is familiar with the poet's lines:—

'Twas ever the way with the good Queen Bess,  
Who ruled as well as a mortal can,  
When she was stogged, and the country in a mess,  
To send for a Devonshire man.

The quotation is entitled to a place of honour in the Preface because it suggested the book; but the scope of the book is nevertheless somewhat larger than the use of the quatrain might indicate. A larger group of Devonians attained eminence in the Elizabethan age than at any other period of history; but at no epoch of which adequate records have been preserved do we find eminent Devonian names lacking. The county has always been worthily represented in all departments of endeavour: by men of letters as well as by men of action; by Churchmen, by statesmen, by poets, by inventors. England owes to Devonshire the invention of the steam-engine as well as the repulse of the

Spanish Armada; the launching of the Tractarian Movement as well as the colonization of Newfoundland, and the discovery of Davis Straits. Devonshire has produced a poet of the first rank in Coleridge, and a painter of the first rank in Sir Joshua Reynolds; elegant literary triflers in the persons of Tom Durfey and Winthrop Mackworth Praed; a great historian in James Anthony Froude; a great novelist in Richard Doddridge Blackmore; a long list of variously interesting divines, including names as diverse in their associations as those of Miles Coverdale, Richard Hurrell Froude, Henry of Exeter, and "Jack" Russell. These, as well as the Elizabethan mariners and buccaneers, will figure in our pageant.

There are already, of course, many county histories, more or less covering the ground; but this modest volume is not put forward in competition with them. It does not profess their completeness; nor is it written in the same scrupulous spirit of detached impartiality. Conditions of space have imposed the necessity of selection; and the object has been to select for treatment those names which are most typical, most interesting, most provocative of curiosity. Nor has the writer felt it incumbent

on him to muffle his own opinions when the course of his narrative has accidentally brought him in contact with a question on which opinions are sharply divided. His primary purpose is in no sense combative or controversial; but he feels that writing—and reading too—would be a poor amusement if writers used language to conceal their thoughts for fear of the possible frowns of possible literary, political, or theological opponents.

With that salutation, he invites all Devonians, without distinction of opinion, to his pageant.





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# The Romance of the Men of Devon

## I

### EXETER

The claims of Crediton—The strategic position of Exeter  
—The ten sieges—Perkin Warbeck—Parson Welsh  
—Exeter and Oxford—Sir Thomas Bodley—The  
Judicious Hooker

IT might be argued that one should begin with Crediton. "Crediton," says the ancient and arrogant rhyme:

"Crediton was a market town  
When Exeter was a fuzzy down."

Very possibly it was. Crediton, at any rate, was once the seat of a bishop and Exeter merely a parish in his diocese. But that was in a very distant past. The Bishopric was transferred from Crediton to Exeter before the Norman Conquest; and Crediton has been "out of the running" ever since. One might write a very

respectable History of England without so much as mentioning Crediton; whereas a History of England which did not make frequent mention of Exeter would be ridiculous.

Exeter was bound to be important because of its strong strategic situation on a hill at the head of an estuary which the small ships of early times had no difficulty in entering. It was an obvious site for a fortress: a place from which invaders from over the sea could be met and repelled: a place which threatened the line of communications of any army which either came from, or invaded, the West Country; the key, therefore, of the West Country, as well as its capital. Those geographical facts sufficed to give it a history as long as English history consisted mainly of foreign raids and civil wars. Whichever of the contending parties held Exeter, the other party necessarily wanted to wrest the city from them. Hence the rôle it sustained from the time of the incursions of the Danes to that of the invasion of William of Orange. It was besieged by William the Conqueror, by Stephen, by Perkin Warbeck. It was assailed in the wars between Yorkists and Lancastrians, in the religious troubles of the Tudor period, and also, of course, in the great Civil War between Charles I and his Parliament. Ten sieges in all stand to its credit; and the era of turbulence did not close until William of Orange marched





*Photo]*

*[Chandler.*

THE OLD GUILDHALL, EXETER.



in from Brixham and took up his quarters in the Deanery.

The Exeter motto, "*Semper fidelis*," descends to us as a memorial of those times; but there is no space here to tell the story of the stirring events which first earned it and then justified it. Many of the citizens, one feels sure, would rather have been allowed to live a quiet life than compelled to speak so frequently and so stormily with enemies in the gate; though others may have found compensation for the inconvenience of the sieges in the exciting spectacles vouchsafed to them after sedition had been suppressed.

For kings did things dramatically in those days, whether they punished their enemies or pardoned them; and one may pause to give an example of a dramatic spectacle of each kind,—our first scene being that in which the curtain falls on the rebellion of Perkin Warbeck.

Perkin, as has just been stated, laid siege to Exeter. He had artillery and six thousand men. He tried both to scale the walls and to undermine them. He burned and forced two of the city gates; and there was street fighting before he was driven out again. That street fighting, however, was all the fighting that he had stomach for. He raised the siege and marched to meet Henry VII at Taunton; and at Taunton his heart failed him a second time,

and he sought sanctuary. Then the King marched on, and entered Exeter without opposition, there to deal with traitors.

He looked out of the window of the Treasurer's house, adjoining Saint Peter's Church; and the traitors were paraded before him, bareheaded, with halters round their necks. Eight trees were cut down, so that he might have a better view of them. They knelt, confessed their errors, and begged for mercy; and then it was the King's turn. He rose and made a gracious speech from the window, granting their prayer; whereupon "the people made a great shout, hurled away their halters, and cried 'God save the King!'"

A very pleasing spectacle, no doubt: widely different, at any rate, from the spectacle which closed the religious rising of the beginning of the reign of Edward VI.

Those rebels also, finding Edward VI too advanced a Protestant for their tastes, laid siege to Exeter, fetching up guns from Topsham, and beleaguered it until Lord Russell, whom we shall meet again at Tavistock, came to the rescue. No Protestantism could be too advanced for Lord Russell's tastes, for the suppression of the monasteries had made him a large landed proprietor in the county; and he soon scattered the insurgents, and then spent twelve days in Exeter, "setting all things in good order, rewarding the good and punishing

the evil." Among those whom he punished was a certain Mr. Welsh, Vicar of the Church of Saint Thomas, whom one pauses to note as a sixteenth-century predecessor of the "sporting parsons" of a later date:

"He was a very good wrestler; shot well both in the long-bow and also in the cross-bow; he handled his hand-gun and piece very well. . . . He was a companion in any exercises of activity, and of courteous and gentle behaviour; he descended of a good honest parentage."

It is a picture of a sixteenth-century counterpart of "Parson Jack Russell"; but Parson Welsh had made the mistake of displaying his athletic talents on the losing side; and therefore he had to pay the penalty, and to pay it in such a manner as afforded entertainment to the populace. The sentence was that he should be hanged from the top of the tower of his own church, where a gallows was duly set up:

"And, all things being ready, and the stage being perfected for this tragedy, the vicar was brought to the place, and, by a rope about his middle, drawn up to the top of the tower, and there in chains hanged in his popish apparel, and had a holy-water bucket and sprinkle, a sacring bell, a pair of beads, and such other

## 22 ROMANCE OF MEN OF DEVON

like popish trash, hanged about him; and there he, with the same about him, remained a long time. He had a very small or no confession, but very patiently took his death."

Such was life at Exeter in what are sometimes called "the good old times." There being as yet no stage-plays, life itself was so arranged as to satisfy the human instinct for the spectacular; and there were spectacles to suit all tastes, even the most barbarous. The marvel is, indeed, that the men of Exeter, with such things continually happening within their walls, found leisure to distinguish themselves in other paths than those of slaughter. Probably, however, these theatrical executions meant no more to them than a visit to the cinematograph means to us; and it is, at any rate, certain that they did excel in many and various fields.

They dug a remarkable canal—of which more presently. They were concerned with some of the earliest chartered companies for trading with the Indies. They served the causes of literature and learning; and it may justly be said that Oxford owes as much to Exeter as Cambridge owes to Ely.

The very first man who can be proved to have lectured at Oxford, in the remote days before any of the colleges had been founded, was Robert Pullein, of Exeter. Exeter College, Oxford, was founded by Walter de Stapledon,

Bishop of Exeter, and Lord High Treasurer in the reign of Edward II. He established "close" scholarships for the sole benefit of men of Devon; and the present writer, having been one of his "poor scholars," recalls his name with gratitude, and pauses to denounce the Londoners who beheaded him in Cheapside for taking his king's part in civil strife. At a later date Bishop Foxe, of Exeter, founded Corpus Christi College, being persuaded to do so, in preference to endowing a monastery, by Archdeacon Oldham, of Exeter, who expressed the opinion that "buzzing monks" had had their day. Last, but not least, it was Thomas Bodley, of Exeter, the son of John Bodley of that city, who founded the Bodleian Library.

He had relatives who did not admire him for doing so, protesting that to spend money on books was to waste it, to the detriment of kith and kin, who would have preferred to devote it to riotous living. "He was so carried away," one of them wrote, "with the vanity and vain glory of his library that he forgot all other respects and duties almost." His idea was that, as Bodley had derived a goodly portion of his wealth from his wife, her family had the first claim on him. Human nature unquestionably speaks—not to say shouts—in that argument; but Bodley's own point of view, expounded in his delightful *Autobiography*, is that of a man who, though vain, was conscientious.

He wished, he says, "not wholly to hide those little abilities that I had," but to "do the true part of a profitable member in the State." He had been Proctor at Oxford, and also Public Orator, and Lecturer in Greek (at the poor salary of four marks a year); and so it was naturally to Oxford that his thoughts turned when, after a distinguished career in the diplomatic service, he sought a useful occupation for his later years. "Having sought," he writes, "as I thought, all the ways to the wood to select the most proper, I concluded at the last to set up my staff at the library door at Oxford." James I found it there, and was pleased to say that Sir Thomas Bodley ought to be called Sir Thomas Godly, and that he himself would willingly be a captive in the library, chained like the books. Most Exeter men will agree that it was better that Lady Bodley's relations should have had a grievance than that Oxford should have lost the Bodleian.

Passing from the collectors of books to the writers of them, we come at once to the memorable name of Hooker: to John Vowel, *alias* Hooker, and Richard Hooker, commonly called the "judicious," whose statue embellishes the cathedral yard.

The elder Hooker, who was the younger Hooker's uncle, was Chamberlain of the city from 1555 until his death. Presumably he was



then a Catholic ; but he never had any difficulty in adapting himself to the official religion, whatever it might be. He represented Exeter in Parliament ; and he wrote the first *History of Exeter*, as well as other books. Our quotations illustrative of the "good old times" at Exeter are taken from his pages. But, of course, his celebrity is only local, whereas the fame of his "poor relation" is world-wide.

Heavitree was Richard Hooker's birthplace ; and his parents, as Izaak Walton puts it, "were not so remarkable for their extraction and riches as for their virtue and industry, and God's blessing upon both." The period was one in which, still to quote old Izaak, children were "less confident and more malleable than in this wiser, but not better, age"; and this particular child was remarked for "meekness and conjuncture of knowledge with modesty." His schoolmaster spoke about him to his Uncle John. His Uncle John spoke about him to another Devonshire man, John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, who had been a Barnstaple grammar-school boy, with the result that he was sent to Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

It seems that he walked all the way to Oxford, and walked all the way home again for the vacations, stopping on the way at Salisbury, to dine with the bishop and receive his benediction and material help. Our friend Izaak gives a charming picture of the visit :

"The Bishop said to him, 'Richard, I send for you back to lend you a horse which hath carried me many a mile, and I thank God, with much ease'; and presently delivered into his hand a walking-staff, with which he professed he had travelled through many parts of Germany. And he said, 'Richard, I do not give, but lend you my horse: be sure you be honest and bring my horse back to me at your return this way to Oxford. And I do now give you ten groats to bear your charges to Exeter; and here is ten groats more which I charge you to deliver to your mother, and tell her I send her a Bishop's benediction with it, and beg the continuance of her prayers for me. And if you bring my horse back to me, I will give you ten groats more, to carry you on foot to the College: and so, God bless you, good Richard.' "

It is a pleasant sketch: the venerable prelate giving the promising undergraduate three-and-fourpence for himself and three-and-fourpence to take home to his mother; but Hooker's career is full of such sympathetic episodes. He was, Fuller says, of a "dove-like simplicity"; and he reminds one, in some respects, of Mr. Pickwick—a benevolent man, too good for a wicked world, and consequently condemned to endure mild misfortune. Like Mr. Pickwick, he was short-sighted; and, like Mr. Pickwick,

he was entangled in a snare set for him by a designing woman.

The designing woman was Mrs. Churchman, who, like Mrs. Bardell, let lodgings in London. Richard Hooker lodged with her when he was a Fellow of Corpus and a select preacher at Paul's Cross. He caught a bad cold while in her house, and, having mixed possets for him, and nursed him like a mother, she went on to talk to him like a mother.

"Mr. Hooker," she said, "you are a man of tender constitution. It would be best for you to have a wife that might prove a nurse to you—such a one as might both prolong your life and make it more comfortable—such a one as I can, and will, provide for you, if you see fit to marry."

The counsel seemed sound, and Mr. Hooker thought that he could trust Mrs. Churchman. He was short-sighted, shy, and simple. It did not occur to him that Mrs. Churchman might be even more anxious to get a daughter off her hands than to make a bachelor happy. So when Mrs. Churchman suggested her daughter Joan, Mr. Hooker said he had no doubt that Joan would make him an excellent wife; and he married her and found, not that he had caught a Tartar, but that a Tartar had caught him, as is attested by Izaak Walton's story of the visit paid to him by two of his old pupils, Edwin Sandys and George Cranmer, in

the country parsonage to which he had retired.

His visitors found him in a field of his glebe, looking after his sheep. Mrs. Hooker, he explained, had assigned him the task, as she wished to employ the shepherd as a manservant in the house. They accompanied him to the parsonage, hoping to enjoy his conversation there; but Mrs. Hooker called to him to come upstairs and rock the baby's cradle. Before these inhospitable proceedings, his guests fled; but they paused on the doorstep to condole with him, remarking that Mrs. Hooker did not appear to be a very "comfortable companion." Whereto the divine of the dove-like simplicity responded:

"My dear George, if saints have usually a double share in the miseries of this life, I, that am none, ought not to repine at what my wise Creator hath appointed for me: but labour—as, indeed, I do daily—to submit myself to His will, and possess my soul in patience and peace."

Decidedly Richard Hooker would have done better to marry a Devonshire maid than to seek a wife in London. He would not then have married "a clownish, silly woman and withal a mere Xanthippe" whose conditions "were too like that wife's which is by Solomon compared to a dripping house." But it may be, of course, that there was also something to be said on Mrs. Hooker's side of the case; and Izaak Walton's description of Hooker's per-

sonal appearance may give us a hint as to her view of the matter. Izaak tells us that many pilgrims came to call on the divine on account of his reputation for piety and learning, and he continues:

“What went they out to see? a man clothed in purple and fine linen? No, indeed: but an obscure, harmless man; a man in poor clothes, his loins usually girt in a coarse gown, or canonical coat; of a mean stature and stooping, and yet more lowly in the thoughts of his soul; his body worn out, not with age, but study and holy mortifications; his face full of heat pimples, begot by his inactivity and sedentary life.”

The pimples do not appear in the statue in the cathedral yard; but that is no reason for concluding that Mrs. Hooker did not notice them; and it is much to be feared that she compared her husband, to his disadvantage, with certain dashing young apprentices whom she had known in the days when her father kept a draper's shop in Watling Street. Such things, deplorable though they are, do sometimes happen; but the subject is a painful one, and need not be pursued. Better to hark back and remark Richard Hooker as a Devonshire man preferred to the important clerical office of Master of the Temple.

He had not sought the office. He had a

Devonshire man's 'love of the country "where he might see God's blessings spring out of the earth and be free from noise"; but it was pressed on him and he accepted it. Possibly Mrs. Hooker insisted. One can understand that it may have pleased her to take a position in Society in the city in which her mother had once let lodgings. If so, the world may be grateful to her; for Hooker's preferment entangled him in the controversy out of which grew the book which made him famous.

There arose certain differences between him and a Mr. Travers who lectured in the Temple Church on Sunday afternoons. One need not go into the controversy further than to say that Hooker was a Churchman of the sort that Queen Elizabeth liked, and that Mr. Travers was a Calvinist. Consequently the two preachers preached at each other, Sunday after Sunday, with courtesy, but also with considerable rhetoric, so that, as Fuller writes, "the pulpit spake pure Canterbury in the morning and Geneva in the afternoon." What Travers said is forgotten; but what Hooker said lives in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*; and his brilliant championship of the cause which he favoured entitles us to conclude that Queen Bess thought it no less desirable to "send for a Devonshire man" when there were heretics to be confuted than when there were Spaniards to be drummed up the Channel.

## II

### EXETER

Tom Durfey—Miles Coverdale—Henry of Exeter—  
Bishop Temple—George Gissing at Exeter

JUST as Queen Elizabeth sent for a Devonshire man to confound her heretics, so Charles II sent for a Devonshire man to divert him: Tom Durfey, who was born at Exeter in 1553.

Tom was half French, and belonged to a good French family. His uncle was no other than Honoré d'Urfé, the dashing soldier who became the first French novelist. His father was a Protestant immigrant who married an English lady. Protestantism had not, however, as it too often does in France, impaired his Gallic vivacity; and Tom inherited wit, and an equable and easy mind. He would not be a lawyer, as was proposed,—the stars in their courses forbade. "My good or ill stars," he has written, "ordained me to be a knight-errant in the fairy-field of poetry." He became a dramatist, and a song-writer; and so made the Merry Monarch merrier.

*Pills to Purge Melancholy* were the literary wares which Tom dispensed; and those

were pills that Charles II was always willing to take. His Majesty was in the royal box on the first night of Tom's first play, and was so pleased that he went to see it on the second and third nights as well. Moreover, the King liked Tom's songs even better than he liked his plays. He did not care for intricate and complicated music,—he only liked the sort of music to which he could beat time; and Tom's songs were set to rattling and familiar tunes. So the King sent for Tom; and he and Tom looked over the same sheet of music, and sang a rollicking duet. It was a proud moment for Tom, as he has told us, and a proud moment for Exeter also.

Nor was Charles II the only sovereign who favoured Tom. James II, William III, and Anne also smiled on him; Anne being specially enthusiastic because Tom knew how to humour her. She commanded him to sing to her at supper, and he prepared a topical song for the occasion, in which he derided the aged Electress Sophia, whom Parliament had made her heir:

“ The crown's far too weighty  
 For shoulders of eighty,  
 She could not sustain such a trophy.  
 Her hand, too, already,  
 Has grown so unsteady  
 She can't hold a sceptre;  
 So Providence kept her  
 Away—poor old Dowager Sophy.”



Such was Tom's ditty; and the Queen gave him fifty guineas for singing it, a fee of unprecedented magnitude at the time. The fact that Tom, after earning fifty guineas in this way, sought to earn further guineas by writing a "Vive le Roy," for Dowager Sophy's son, George I, may be excused on the ground that comic song-writers cannot be expected to take politics more seriously than Vicars of Bray.

Tom, at any rate, was one of those easy-going good-tempered people for whom excuses are always forthcoming when they need them. He had many good friends, including Pope and Addison and Steele and Gay and Dr. Arbuthnot, and very few enemies, though a rival humorist, Tom Brown, did once address him as "Thou cur, half-French, half-English breed"; and he enjoyed his popularity without making great literary pretensions, saying with the stammer which he could only escape from when he sang, "The Town may da-da-damn me as a poet, but they sing my songs for all that." Consequently when, in his age, he fell upon difficult times, he was given a benefit at Drury Lane, and Addison appealed for help for him, writing:

"He has made the world merry, and I hope they will make him easy as long as he stays among us. This I will take upon me to say, they cannot do a kindness to a more diverting companion, or a more cheerful, honest, good-natured man."

There is an epitaph on Tom which runs as follows:

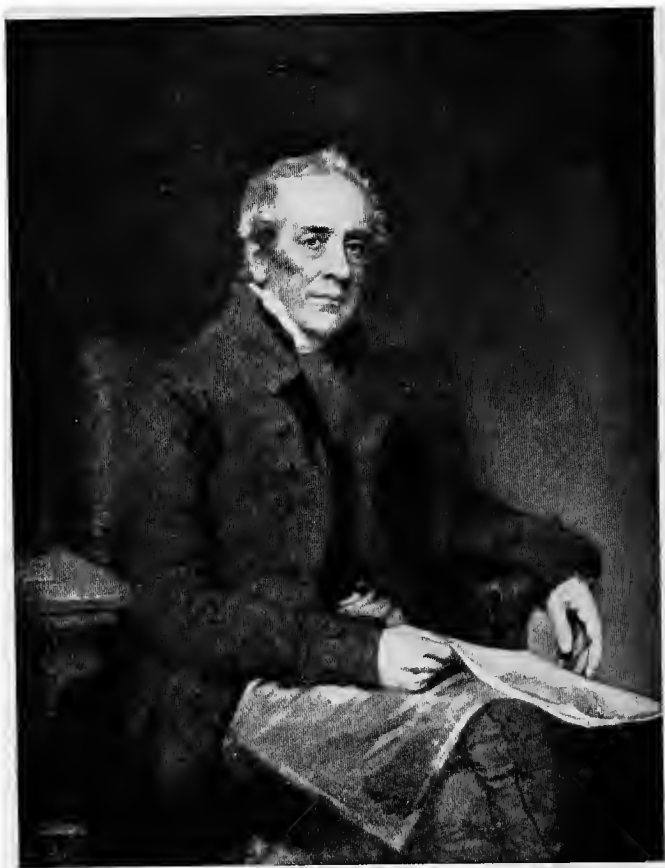
“Here lyes the Lyrick, who, with tale and song,  
Did life to three score years and ten prolong;  
His tale was pleasant and his song was sweet,  
His heart was cheerful—but his thirst was great.”

The last line, however, implies a calumny. The truth seems to be that, though Tom drank a good deal, he never failed to carry his liquor like a gentleman. He was a genial companion, too, and it may be read in the *Tatler* that “many an honest gentleman has got a reputation in this country by pretending to have been in the company of Tom Durfey.” Let us wish peace to his ashes, and pass on.

We might, indeed, if we liked, pass back, noting that Archbishop Langton, who drafted Magna Charta, was an Exeter man; but we will instead search the list of Bishops of Exeter for illustrious names. Coverdale, Trelawney, Phillpotts, Temple,—those are the names on which there is most temptation to pause.

All the world knows that Miles Coverdale translated the Bible into English, though he appears to have translated it, not from the Hebrew, but from the Latin. He has a further claim on our interest in the fact that he was the first Bishop of Exeter to marry; and Mrs. Coverdale is “well spoken of,” and was evidently a very different sort of woman from





BISHOP PHILLPOTTS.

Mrs. Hooker. Trelawney, of course, is best remembered through Parson Hawker's "Song of the Western Men":

"And have they fixed the where and when?  
And shall Trelawney die?  
Here's twenty thousand Cornishmen  
Will know the reason why."

But whether that song, the refrain of which is traditional, and not due to Parson Hawker at all, really refers to the Bishop Trelawney whom James II put on his trial together with six other Bishops, or to some earlier member of the same family, is uncertain.

Concerning Bishop Phillpotts there are no doubtful points to be cleared up. He is the Henry of Exeter whom we shall meet again, more than once, in these pages: a stately personage of whom the county is proud, albeit without letting its heart go out to him. Just as George III's mother, according to the story, said to him, "George, be a King," so one can picture Henry Phillpotts' mother saying to him, "Henry, be a Bishop." At all events Henry Phillpotts was the kind of bishop of whom the vulgar would say that he was "something like a bishop," or perhaps that he was "a bishop and no mistake": a picturesque modern link, that is to say, with mediæval ecclesiasticism; a man of character rather than intellect, and of prejudices rather than ideas; a High

Churchman of the old days prior to the Oxford Movement, who considered that the Tractarians had nothing to teach him, and, above all things, a disciplinarian who proposed to be ruler in his own diocese.

He stood no nonsense from latitudinarians, prevented Charles Kingsley from preaching at Torquay, and compelled a Cabinet Minister to apologize for counselling him to "set his house in order." The quality of his temper was best displayed, perhaps, in the dispute which resulted in the Gorham Judgment; but this is no place for the relation of that theological controversy, and it will suffice to salute Henry of Exeter respectfully, before going on to glance at the career of his successor, Bishop Temple.

Temple was of a Cornish family, and was born in the Ionian Islands; but his mother lived at Culmstock, and he was educated at Blundell's School, Tiverton—of which more anon—lodging in the town in the same house with Richard Blackmore. It was a fighting school in those days, and he could punch a head with the best, with the result that he did not need to punch heads very often. It was also a football-playing school, and his episcopal gaiters covered the abiding traces of a hack received on a day when, being set as a small boy to keep goal, he was kicked through the goal-posts together with the ball. In due course,

he won a Blundell scholarship at Balliol, the casting vote in his favour being given by Sir Thomas Acland; and he had not been there long before the Master of Balliol let him know that his personal opinion of Blundell scholars was a poor one.

"You Blundell scholars," Dr. Jenkyns said, "have certainly very great advantages; coming up, as you do, very *inferior* men into the society of very *superior* men: some of you are improved by it, and some are not."

It was not a very courteous way of putting it; but Jenkyns meant no harm. He presently sent for Temple, whom he knew to be very poor, and insisted upon giving him a £10 note; and whether the Blundell scholars of Temple's time were inferior men or not, the open scholars of the College, whom they had the opportunity of knowing, were brilliant. Temple was the contemporary of Dean Stanley, Matthew Arnold, Arthur Hugh Clough, and Principal Shairp; and there is a pen portrait of him in Shairp's well-known poem on the Balliol scholars:

"There, too, was one, broad-browed, with open face,  
And frame for toil compacted—him with pride  
A school of Devon from a rural place  
Had sent to stand these chosen ones beside:  
From childhood trained all hardship to endure,  
To love the things that noble are, and pure,  
And think and do the truth, whate'er betide.

With strength for labour, 'as the strength of ten,  
 To ceaseless toil he girt him, night and day :  
 A native King and ruler among men,  
 Ploughman or Premier, born to bear true sway :  
 Small or great duty never known to shirk,  
 He bounded joyously to sternest work—  
 Less buoyant others turn to sport and play."

A worker ever, and also a man who knew how to get work out of others,—that was the verdict of the assistant masters who served under the Devonshire man who was sent for to restore the fortunes of the great school which Arnold had made famous and Goulburn had "let down." It is said that he was the best head master of all those who followed Arnold; but one need not be so invidious as to insist upon that. He was, at any rate, a great and good head master, though the local people said that he could not possibly be a gentleman, seeing that he carried his own bag from the station to the school-house when he arrived to take command.

That, of course, was a small incident, easy to live down. Prejudices more formidable, though of a different character, were aroused when the parents of the pupils read his contribution to *Essays and Reviews*, which appeared about two years after his appointment. There were amateur theologians of both sexes among those parents; and one of them wrote to her son, R. W. Hanbury, afterwards Presi-



dent of the Board of Agriculture, warning him not to let his head master lead him away from the faith of his fathers. The answer shows how well the head master had got the school in hand. It ran: "Dear Mother,—Temple's all right; but if he turns Mahometan, all the school will turn too."

The Diocese of Exeter, of course, was not quite so amenable as Rugby School. There were people there, among the laity as well as the clergy, who claimed to be more religious—or, at all events, more orthodox—than their bishop; and there were busy-bodies outside—Pusey among the number—who loudly encouraged them in their complacent belief. Though Temple calmed the storm, and satisfied the majority, a remnant always objected, not only to the Bishop's beliefs, but also to his manners.

When Temple was at Balliol, his undergraduate contemporaries amused themselves by drawing up an imaginary class-list in which men's places were assigned to them with regard to their manners alone, and without reference to their other accomplishments. Temple was one of those who "took firsts" in that strange competition; and the standard at Oxford is such that that honour would never have been accorded to any man with whose manners there was anything seriously amiss. He seems, however, to have grown to be a little brusque and

heavy-handed, a little prone to break a butterfly upon a wheel; the butterflies being the inferior clergy.

He meant no harm,—on the contrary he meant very well; but he did not quite realize how formidable he was, or how men of inferior calibre trembled in his presence. To them it seemed that he judged them too severely by unfamiliar standards; that he suspected every visitor of a desire to waste his time, and every polite interlocutor of trying either to curry favour or to distract episcopal attention from some neglect of duty. The fact is that he was terribly in earnest, accustomed to rule over boys, and suspicious by nature of those who, in vulgar parlance, “put on frills,” whether social, intellectual, or ecclesiastical. Hence the stories of his bluff repartees which the wind of gossip blew up and down the diocese.

The most cruel of his retorts was that addressed to a deputation of school teachers who seemed to him to be putting on frills when they protested that somebody or other had not “treated them like gentlemen.” “Well, what of that? You *aren't* gentlemen,” was all the comfort that those teachers got; and many other deputations were dismissed from the episcopal presence with similar fleas in their ears, with the result that it came to be said that an interview with him generally resolved itself into a drama in three acts with an un-





SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE.

happy, though by no means inconclusive, ending:

Act I: "Who are you?"

Act II: "What do you want?"

Act III: "No!"

It was a calumny, of course,—the complaint of those who offered their bishop advice which he did not require, or sought to lure him from the straight path of even-handed justice, or troubled him about trivialities, or submitted ill-considered schemes; but no doubt there was a ruggedness and an impatience in the episcopal demeanour which accounted for it. Even the wives of the clergy were occasionally the victims of that ruggedness—the lady, for instance, whose cold chicken he declined, asking for dry bread instead, at a confirmation luncheon, with the brusque complaint that his clergy never gave him anything *but* cold chicken for lunch. But there, again, the Bishop meant no harm; and, on the whole, he became a popular, as well as a good, bishop, and one in whose ultimate preferment to the highest ecclesiastical office all Devonshire men rejoiced.

Sir Stafford Northcote, who was Temple's contemporary at Balliol, should be mentioned next; but about him there is little to say, unless one should set oneself the task of writing his life—a task which has already been ably discharged by Mr. Andrew Lang. Both his career and his personality were normal. There was

nothing picturesque about him. Even Lord Randolph Churchill did not make him picturesque by nicknaming him the "goat." He was a man of equable character, whose courtesy never failed him under the trial of party warfare. It was his manner in Parliament always to preface an attack with graceful compliments to his opponents; and, as Mr. Lang says, "he lived without a stain and he died without an enemy."

There was a time, indeed, when he very nearly became picturesque, and even original. He was young at the time of the Oxford Movement, and the problems of religion fascinated him. In the years in which some men became Roman Catholics and others Honest Doubters, he very nearly became an Irvingite. Very nearly, but not quite. He was attracted to the path which is resonant with "tongues" and impressive with miracles; but a certain innate conservatism and appreciation of the *juste mesure* restrained him from actually walking in it. His part was to be played in political rather than religious controversies; and we will leave him playing it, and proceed to speak of a literary association, which may prove to be unexpected.

George Gissing was not a man of Devon; but he was, for some time, a resident in Exeter; and he lived there for no other reason than because he chose to do so, being drawn, as

he said, to the West Country because he had been born and brought up at Wakefield.

Perhaps it is necessary to know Wakefield in order to feel the full force of that remark; perhaps an unreasoning aversion from the necessary evils of industrialism will suffice to explain it. Gissing, at any rate, felt the oppressiveness, the sordidness, and the vulgarity of the congested centres in which men make haste to grow rich. He wrote of them, indeed, with genius; but he was depicting scenes which he loathed; and that may be one of the reasons why his books were more admired than bought. But the day came when, having won a little freedom to live as he chose, he settled in a suburb of Exeter, whence he presently moved to Budleigh Salterton; and it is a singular thing—and to Devonians a very gratifying thing—that the book which the West Country inspired was the most successful of all his books.

The book is, of course, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*.

It is not a book which, like Blackmore's books, seems to spring out of the soil. There is no dialect in it,—Gissing was too great an artist to imagine that West-Country dialect could be written correctly by a Yorkshireman. It is not a book of which anyone would say, as a West Countryman once said of *Lorna Doone*, that it is "as good as clotted cream—almost." But it is the book of a man who

trusted the beneficent healing power of the West Country to pour balsam on the wounds which the jagged weapons of outrageous fortune had inflicted; and therefore the sojourn of George Gissing at Exeter, submitting himself in solitude to the influences which inspired that one book of his which found its way to the hearts of a great multitude of readers, must be ranked henceforward as not the least interesting of the literary associations alike of the city and of the county.



### III

#### THE ESTUARY OF THE EXE: RIGHT BANK

The Courtenays—Edward Courtenay and Queen Mary  
—Dawlish—The Rev. R. H. D. Barham—Teign-  
mouth—The French raid—Praed and Keats

THE men of Devon whom we meet as we descend the right bank of the Exe are, of course, the Courtenays of Powderham Castle—the oldest of the many old families of the county. Their origin is lost in the thick mists of the Dark Age. They emerge from it as splendidly as the sun rises from behind a bank of fog: their names blazoned in the majestic pages of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. A pageant of Courtenays—Courtenays of Edessa, Courtenays of France, Courtenays of England—marches past us, in magnificent procession, in the seventh volume of that sonorous history.

Their annals can be traced even further back than the reign of the French King, Hugh Capet. In the reign of Hugh's son, Robert, they are

already "conspicuous among the immediate vassals of the crown." We find them listening to the call of adventure and fighting in the Crusades; we discover one Courtenay dying in a Turkish prison at Aleppo, and others wearing the purple at Constantinople as Emperors of the East. A Courtenay, moreover, established himself as a robber-baron near Paris; and all the King's horses and all the King's men had to be set in motion to compel him to disgorge his plunder. He was so great a man that, even when he was overcome, he was not punished, but was asked to give his daughter in marriage to the seventh son of Louis the Fat: so important, also, that that royal prince adopted the arms and name of Courtenay.

There came an end, however, to the glory of the continental Courtenays. The Courtenay Emperors of Constantinople "wandered over Europe to solicit alms for the support of their dignity and the defence of their capital," and finally "depended on the annual charity of Rome and Naples." The Courtenays who had been sought in marriage by the House of Capet declined to the estate of peasants. They besought Henri IV to restore their fortunes and prestige, comparing themselves to "the descendants of King David whose prerogatives were not impaired by the lapse of ages or the trade of a carpenter"; but a deaf ear was turned to their request, and they were treated

with the contumely which is so often the lot of "poor relations." It is the English branch of the house which, through good fortune and ill, has succeeded in maintaining the honour of the name.

Their ancestor is Reginald Courtenay, who established himself in Devonshire in the reign of Henry II; and their vicissitudes are commemorated in their motto: "*Ubi lapsus? Quid feci?*" The name of one of them figures in the first list of Knights of the Garter—the Order which Lord Melbourne valued so highly because, as he said, there was "no d—d nonsense about merit." Another married a daughter of Edward IV. But a third, after being raised to honour as Marquis of Exeter by his cousin, Henry VIII, was afterwards beheaded by that mutable monarch; and the story of his son, Edward Courtenay, is full of pathos.

He passed his childhood as a prisoner in the Tower; and no prison is a good school for youth. He grew up to be amiable but weak—a tool in the hands of conspirators, but not a tool to be trusted by them. Persecution, however, had invested him, in the popular eyes, with imaginary graces; and when Mary came to the throne, it was hoped and expected that she would marry him. "I trust in the Lord," says a contemporary letter-writer, "to live to see the day her Grace to marry such an one as knoweth what adversity meaneth; so shall

we have both a merciful queen and king to their subjects; and would to God I might live to have another virtuous Edward."

But that was not to be; and Mary's behaviour at the time when the rumours were circulating must have struck Edward Courtenay as queer. Let Froude summarize them for us:

"The Queen affected to treat Courtenay as a child; she commanded him to keep to his house; she forbade him to dine abroad without special permission; the title of Earl of Devon was given to him, and he had a dress made for him to take his seat in, but the queen would not allow him to wear it."

What was the meaning of that? It is not quite clear whether it meant that Mary wished to show Philip of Spain, who had come forward as a suitor, that there was no need for jealousy, or that Mary was herself jealous of her sister Elizabeth, and suspected Courtenay of transferring his addresses to her. Very likely her motives were mixed. The suggestion, at any rate, was made that Courtenay should elope to the West with Elizabeth, and there raise the standard of revolt. But there were difficulties. Whatever Mary might think, Courtenay was not in love with Elizabeth, but complained that her haughty manner frightened him. He really wanted to marry Mary; he really believed, up to the last, that Mary meant to marry him;

he even went so far as to order a wedding garment; so he left the conspiracy to others, and allowed his knowledge of it to be dragged out of him by skilful cross-examination.

Afterwards he went abroad and settled at Venice; but his name was still so potent that conspirators, in spite of his treachery, continued to want him for a figure-head. They sent Henry Killigrew to Italy to implore him to come home and permit himself to be pushed along in front of the movement. He promised to come; but it is impossible to know whether he meant to keep his promise or not, for he died of malaria before he had time to start. The title of Earl of Devon became extinct with him, though it was afterwards revived in favour of a younger branch of the house.

It may be added, before we leave the subject, that the relations between the Courtenays and the citizens of Exeter were not always happy—relations between feudal lords and burghers were, indeed, generally strained in feudal times. The stock story is a fish story, related, appropriately, by Izaak Walton. One day there was very little fish in the market, and the Earl of Devon demanded the whole of it, though not only the citizens, but also the Bishop, were clamouring for a share. Not being allowed to have his way, the Earl sent for the Mayor and gave him a wiggling; and as the Mayor stood

up for the rights of the town, the Earl avenged himself by closing Countess Weir and building two other weirs, so as to shut Exeter off from the sea. A good many years elapsed before a royal charter permitted the turning of the obstacle by means of a canal.

And now we are clear of Exeter, and are approaching Dawlish.

Dawlish seems to have been a fashionable watering-place ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and is mentioned as such in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*; but there is only one name which imposes itself,—the name of the Rev. R. H. D. Barham, son of the author of *Ingoldsby Legends*.

He was not a Devonian by birth; but he spent twenty-three years at Dawlish for the benefit of his health—from 1863 to 1886—and, being already known as an author through his *Life of Theodore Hook*, he wrote a poem about Dawlish for *Temple Bar*. His connection with that periodical—or at all events with its proprietors—was in a sense hereditary. The original Barham had been a friend of the Bentleys. It was he who, when the name of *The Wits' Miscellany* was changed to *Bentley's Miscellany*, approved of the change, but added maliciously: "Still, why go to the opposite extreme?" And it may be added that the younger Barham's poem on Dawlish—*The Monk*

*of Haldon* is its title—is just the sort of poem that his father might have written, and, indeed, did write, about sundry places in Kent. An impression pervades it of a son trying to carry on the poetical business which his father has bequeathed to him:

“ ’Tis certainly odd that this part of the coast,  
While neighbouring Dorset gleams white as a ghost,  
Should look like anchovy paste spread upon toast !  
    We need not now pause  
    To find out the cause  
Of this variation in natural laws ;  
    But Mr. Pengelly  
    Can easily tell ye—  
(I think, by the way, that the gentleman said,  
’Twas iron or manganese made it so red).

    “ Then low at your feet,  
    From this airy retreat,  
Reaching down where the fresh and the salt water  
    meet,  
The roofs may be seen of an old-fashioned street ;  
Half village—half town it is—pleasant but smallish,  
And known, where it happens to *be* known, as  
    Dawlish.

    A place I’d suggest  
    As one of the best  
For a man breaking down who needs absolute rest,  
Especially, too, if he’s weak in the chest.  
    Torquay may be gayer,  
    But as for the air,  
It really cannot for a moment compare  
With snug little Dawlish—at least, so they say  
    here.”

Excellent sentiments; to which may be added a few lines indicating the route which we have next to take:

" To the right, under Haldon,  
Lie Teignmouth and Shaldon,  
With hamlets whose names to recount I'm not  
called on."

Teignmouth has more history than Dawlish, though it is not, like Dawlish, mentioned in *Domesday Book*. It was raided and burnt by the French when we lost the command of the sea in 1690. A signal fire lighted on Haldon summoned the yeomanry to the rescue. The yeomen mustered on Haldon and frightened the raiders away, but not before enormous damage had been done, necessitating collections in all the parish churches throughout the kingdom for the relief of the distressed. An "unfortunate incident," indeed, but one which probably did even more harm to the cause of the Jacobites, whom the French represented, than to Teignmouth. If that, people argued, was how James II and his French friends proposed to treat Englishmen, then James II had much better remain with his French friends in France.

It is an open question whether the men of Teignmouth showed cowardice in failing to show fight. Certainly they scattered like sheep without a shepherd; but with the French guns







WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED.

trained on the town, and no guns of their own with which to reply, they could hardly have made any effective resistance. One can only remark that Mr. Errington, the curate-in-charge of certain of the churches, exhibited the qualities of a man of peace in rather an exaggerated degree. He not only mounted his horse and fled before the raiders, as many others did, but he fled so fast and so far that Teignmouth never saw or heard of him again.

But now we will leave these shocking scenes and speak of Teignmouth as the Praed and Keats country.

Decidedly there is piquant incongruity in the thought that the Praed country is also (in however slight a degree) the Keats country, and that poets so diverse as these two once passed each other, day after day, in the streets of a watering-place so small that everybody expected to know everybody else, at least by sight. It happened so, however, at Teignmouth in 1818; and the modern visitor, in search, as Keats was, of sunshine, may spend an afternoon worse than in looking for their traces. He is more certain to discover those traces than to find the sunshine, of which Keats, indeed, being unfortunate in the season of his visit, found very little.

Only one must not search for the two poets at the same end of the town, or imagine that they ever met. There is no evidence that they did so; and there is a strong probability that

they did not. Their "sets" (if Keats can be said to have had a "set") were widely different; and Teignmouth was then, as it is now, a town with a very precise sense of social values. The "best people" in Teignmouth, one feels sure, would have lifted hands of horror, and wondered what the world was coming to, if they had observed young Praed consorting with young Keats.

For Praed was "county," or, if not quite "county," very nearly so. His father was a Serjeant-at-Law, and kept carriages, and had a "place" at Bitton, a suburb in those days, though Teignmouth has since stretched out to it. He himself was an Etonian, destined for Cambridge—a tall and handsome Sixth Form boy, who wrote brilliant light verse for the school magazines,—a leader of fashion in the best Teignmouth circles, a great favourite with the Teignmouth ladies, the most popular of their partners at the subscription dances, in the Assembly Rooms, still standing, attached to the London Hotel. A good many of his light poems are about Teignmouth, and they are like guide-books for exactitude. They show him to us walking with the girls on the Den, and keeping a boat at Shaldon, and organizing amateur theatricals and river picnics, and inspecting the "arrivals at a watering-place." One is tempted to look for Keats in the list of those arrivals.

"That poor young man! I'm sure and certain  
 Despair is making up his shroud;  
 He walks all night beneath the curtain  
 Of the dim sky and murky cloud:  
 Draws landscapes—throws such mournful glances;  
 Writes verses—has such splendid eyes;  
 An ugly name—but Laura fancies  
 He's some great person in disguise."

That *may* have been meant for Keats,—the likeness is good enough to pass; but the proposal in the next quatrain that the "poor young man" should be "called upon" is against the identification. One does not easily picture such people as the Praeds leaving a card at Keats's door. The enquiries which they would have been sure to make before doing so would not have satisfied them. There would have been no one to tell them that Keats was an immortal poet destined to outshine Praed as the sun outshines the moon; but there would have been people to tell them that he was the son of a livery-stable-keeper, and the apprentice of an apothecary. The information would have checked their advances; and they would have found a further obstacle in Keats's address, and in the company which he kept.

For Keats was only "in lodgings," and not in very fashionable lodgings. He could not afford rooms "on the front," but located himself in the Strand. The house is still standing (though it has no commemorative medallion),

and every visitor can decide for himself whether it is the sort of house that he would like to stay in. Instead of a view of the sea, it commands a view of a bonnet-shop—which bonnet-shop was already there in Keats's time, and figures in his letters. Not the bonnets, but the young ladies who trimmed them, were the attraction for him. It seems that signals of some sort were flashed from his window to theirs (and also, no doubt, from their window to his) and that when the rain rained every day (as he protested that it was apt to do at Teignmouth) he used to step across and ask them, individually and collectively, when they thought it was likely to clear up. Theirs and the barber's and the doctor's, in short, seem to have been almost the only friendly human voices which Keats heard during his stay at Teignmouth. The presumption is strong that he took one or other of them (or perhaps all of them in turn) for country walks and excursions on the river; and one imagines that he would have cared nothing for the county balls, at which Praed danced and flirted with such admirable elegance, unless he could have taken a girl or two from the bonnet-shop to be his partners. One feels that the bonnet-shop should be proud of the tradition, and should, no less than the lodging-house, be embellished with a memorial plaque.

But Praed,—well, one knows exactly how that squire of dames would have turned up his



*Photo]*

KEATS' HOUSE, TEIGNMOUTH.

*[Donney.*





supercilious nose at the squire of milliners, when they were contemporaries at Teignmouth in 1818. To the dashing young Etonian the dashing young apothecary's apprentice would have seemed neither more nor less than an "outsider" — or whatever they called "outsiders" in those distant times. Even if he had been invited to look over the poem on which the apothecary's apprentice was engaged, he probably would not have realized that it was any better than a dozen little things of his own—he would certainly have needed to be wiser than most of the critics of the time to do so. But time has taken its revenge, and redressed the uneven balance. Praed cannot soar where Keats is sitting now; the poem which Keats wrote at Teignmouth was *Endymion*.

## IV

### TORQUAY AND BRIXHAM

Contemporaries—Mr. W. E. Norris and Mr. Eden Phillpotts—Philip Gosse, the naturalist—The author of "Abide with me"

TORQUAY is nothing if not modern and "residential." It hardly claims to have a history. The bay, of course, has its annals: its memories of the capture of the flagship of the Armada, and the confinement of its crew, with George Cary and Sir John Gilbert for their gaolers, in Torre Abbey; of the landing of William of Orange, at Brixham; of the arrival of Napoleon on the *Bellerophon*. The town itself is practically a new growth of the nineteenth century. The men of Devon whom one associates with it were not born there, but attracted thither by the reports of a mild climate, abundant sunshine, and scenery comparable to that of the Bay of Naples.

Not all of them have been pleased. It was one of them—no matter which—who spread the calumny that the citizens of Torquay are so accustomed to rain that they go about under

open umbrellas, even in fine weather, from the force of habit. The present writer, however, has never, on any of his visits, so much as seen an open umbrella at Torquay; and the length of the visitors' list—though he ignores all but the most distinguished names on it—convinces him, without reference to the statistics, that the umbrella-makers of Torquay have no cause to boast of greater prosperity than their neighbours.

James Anthony Froude preached at Torquay at the time when he was a clerk in holy orders. Charles Kingsley was forbidden to preach there by Henry of Exeter, who regarded him as a dangerous, if not a devilish character. Bulwer Lytton took a house there in 1856, and died there in 1873. Miss Barrett spent three years there in vain quest of health before her elopement with Robert Browning. Disraeli went there on a visit to the lady who afterwards gave him a practical proof of her affectionate regard by bequeathing him the whole of her considerable fortune on condition that he would allow her to be buried at Hughenden. Contemporary literature is represented there by Mr. W. E. Norris and by Mr. Eden Phillpotts—to whom a special salutation in memory of old times when he and the chronicler were colleagues on the staff of the *Idler*, launched by the joint enterprise of Messrs. Jerome K. Jerome and Robert Barr.

If this book were chiefly about the living, then this chapter of it would be chiefly about Mr. Phillpotts; for he, unlike some of the others, is not only in Devonshire, but of it. His first thought, when Fortune began to smile upon his pen, was to get clear of the *fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ*, and once more breathe the bland air of his own county. Gibbon, it will be remembered, used the same quotation when relating his departure from London to live at Lausanne; and the task which Mr. Phillpotts has set himself is hardly on a smaller scale than Gibbon's prodigious history: a cycle of romances embracing West-Country life in all its aspects, and Dartmoor, in particular, in all its moods. It will be a great monument when he has finished building it: *ære perennius*, one confidently hopes.

So much of the present—and of the future. Our choice of great names in the past is not embarrassingly rich; but we will make a choice and evoke the picturesque figure of Philip Gosse.

Philip Gosse was not born at Torquay—the town has still to make its reputation as a birthplace; but he lived there for about thirty years, and did a goodly portion of his life's work there—a solitary and secluded, but nevertheless a conspicuous, man, playing a double part as a student and exponent of marine zoology, and a pillar of the queer, and not



*Photo]*

*[Durrant.*

MR. EDEN PHILLPOTTS.



wholly satisfactory, sect of Plymouth Brethren. One has the advantage of inspecting him through the glasses of his son, Mr. Edmund Gosse, who has won even greater distinction in a widely different field of labour.

The Life of his father which Mr. Edmund Gosse has written is almost unique among works of the kind, combining filial piety with independent criticism in a truly remarkable manner. The biographer cares little for the sciences to which his father consecrated his life, and shows as little sympathy with his father's peculiar religious tenets as with the worship of Baal or Dagon. Of these matters, and indeed, of his father generally, he takes a detached and almost impersonal view. He has the air of examining his father in the same scientific spirit in which his father examined the seaweeds and the sea-anemones, but with a livelier sense of humour.

He shows pride in his achievements, which are, indeed, achievements to be proud of. Philip Gosse was a man who accomplished a great deal with a very poor equipment—becoming a great naturalist because he must—because the passion of the collector was in him and must be gratified in spite of the most adverse circumstances. Brought up at Poole, in Dorsetshire, he made his poor start in life as a junior clerk in a Newfoundland counting-house. He became a farmer in Canada, and failed; he

became a school teacher in Alabama, and failed at that also. But his failures were largely due to the qualities which were to secure his ultimate success. Wherever he went, and whatever he did, he carried a cabinet with him, and accumulated entomological specimens. His acquaintances took an interest—a sporting rather than a scientific interest—in his collection. They were eager to show him some insect which he had never seen before; they brought him butterflies, earwigs, beetles, caterpillars, cockroaches—any flying or creeping thing which they thought likely to please or puzzle him. He added all their gifts to his store and studied them, looking them up in encyclopædias, painting them, and in the end writing about them.

It was a hard struggle—his early literary struggles were particularly hard. His first London lodging was in Drury Lane—the unreformed Drury Lane of half a century ago—the malodorous haunt of the disreputable classes. Though he got a hundred guineas for his first book, he was reduced, before he got it, to living on herrings—one herring a day being his modest allowance; and even then, he was still far from fortune. When he wrote popular scientific treatises for the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, that literary handmaid of the Church took most of the money which they earned. But success, and a competence, came at last; and Philip Gosse



established himself as the best-known writer and lecturer on popular science of his day.

An honourable record truly. Philip Gosse's son, as has been said, recites it with enthusiasm, but an enthusiasm which is singularly dispassionate and unfailingly tempered with a sense of humour. That sense of humour is specially apparent in Mr. Edmund Gosse's description of the search for the uncommon objects of the sea-shore on the various Torquay beaches—quests in which he was often, as a child, his father's companion:

“ Even as a little child ” (Mr. Gosse writes) “ I was conscious that my father's appearance on these excursions was eccentric. He had a penchant for an enormous felt hat, which had once been black, but was now grey and rusty with age and salt. For some reason or other he seldom could be persuaded to wear clothes of such a light colour and material as other sportsmen affect. Black broadcloth, reduced to an extreme seediness, and cut in ancient forms, was the favourite attire for the shore, and after being soaked many times, and dried in the sun on his somewhat portly person, it grew to look as if it might have been bequeathed to him by some ancient missionary long marooned, with no other garments, upon a coral island. His ample boots, reaching to mid-thigh, completed his professional garb, and when he was

seen, in full sunlight, he might have been easily mistaken for a superannuated working shrimper."

One could wish for no more graphic sketch of Torquay's most famous citizen; but, of course, Philip Gosse, the naturalist, was only half the man. The other half was the Plymouth Brother, who exhorted, and examined, and baptized adults by immersion, at first in the presence of the multitude on Oddicombe beach, but afterwards in a tank, dug for the purpose, in the meeting house. Mr. Edmund Gosse was himself baptized, as a great privilege, at the age of ten; and he relates that he was so uplifted by spiritual pride at the distinction that he put out his tongue at other boys of the same age who were not yet thought worthy of water and the Spirit.

It was inevitable, of course, that the Man of Science in Philip Gosse should sometimes get into trouble with, and need to be pulled up by, the Plymouth Brother. Geology was giving the go-by to Genesis in his time; and he was the contemporary of Charles Darwin. Some people who were orthodox—and others who were not so orthodox—tried to refute the novel scientific doctrines with a sneer. Dean Burgon said that he would rather look for his first parents in the Garden of Eden than in the Zoological Gardens. Disraeli propounded to

Bishop Wilberforce the delightful conundrum: "Is man an ape or an angel?" and cheered the episcopal heart with the comfortable answer: "I, my lord, am on the side of the angels." Philip Gosse was much too serious a man to do that sort of thing.

He set himself the task of reconciling the conclusions of science with the Mosaic cosmogony, and only got laughed at for his pains: laughed at even by those from whom he thought he had a right to look for sympathy. Huxley was openly scornful; Darwin took no notice; even Charles Kingsley professed himself "staggered and puzzled," and evaded a promise to review the work; while a flippant Press commented disdainfully on the view that "God hid the fossils in the rocks in order to tempt geologists into infidelity." It was a knock-down blow, from the effects of which he did not easily recover. "A gloom, cold and dismal," writes his son, "descended upon our morning tea-cups"; and the Man of Science became more of a Plymouth Brother than ever, as is typically demonstrated by the dramatic story of his action in the matter of the plum-pudding.

It was Christmas Day; and Philip Gosse regarded the common manner of celebrating Christmas Day as "nothing less than an act of idolatry." He objected, not only to Christmas trees, and Yule logs, but also to Christmas fare. A cold shoulder of mutton and a sago-

pudding was dinner enough for him, and must be dinner enough for his household, on the occasion of the festival. It was not, however, dinner enough to please his servants. They made a plum-pudding surreptitiously, and invited Mr. Edmund Gosse to the kitchen, and gave him a large slice of it. Unhappily it disagreed with him. Suffering from the pangs of indigestion, and supposing them to be the punishment of Heaven for his fault, he ran to his father's study, and confessed what he had eaten. Then, to quote Mr. Edmund Gosse:

"My father sternly said, 'Where is the accursed thing?' I explained that as much as was left of it was still on the kitchen table. He took me by the hand, and ran with me into the midst of the startled servants, seized what remained of the pudding, and with the plate in one hand and me still tight in the other, ran till we reached the dust-heap, when he flung the idolatrous confectionery on to the middle of the ashes, and then raked it deep down into the mass. The suddenness, the violence, the velocity of this extraordinary act made an impression on my memory which nothing will ever efface."

So the world wagged at Torquay; and so we will leave it wagging there, while we travel round the bay to Brixham.

The two celebrities of Brixham are, of course,

William III, who landed there, and Henry Francis Lyte, the author of "Abide with me," who spent a quarter of a century there as incumbent of one of the churches. There is a link between them in the fact that one of the best stories of the arrival of the Prince of Orange on our shores is related in Lyte's commonplace book. The hero of it is the sturdy little man on whose shoulders the Prince was carried to land, and who rode before him on his pony as far as Newton Abbot. The commonplace book proceeds:

"On taking his leave before returning to Brixham, William of Orange gave the little man a slip of paper, and promised that, if he would come and visit him in London after the coronation, he should be well rewarded. So after a while the sturdy Brixhamite started for London, and put up at an inn, where some sharpers learned from him his errand, made him gloriously drunk, and stealing the paper, presented it at the Palace, claiming the reward, which was duly paid. The little man, on recovering his sense, also proceeded to the Palace, but having no paper to show, was driven away as an impostor, and returned sadly to Brixham, where he could never again hold up his head."

The story is one which temperance orators should treasure up for use. Of Lyte, who told the story, there are no stories to be told except

one which exhibits him as a politician with local influence. He was a Tory with the hatred of Radicals which it was considered proper for the parsons of those days to entertain, and a great friend of the Radical member, Sir John Yarde-Buller. Sir John, being hard pressed by his Radical opponent, appealed to Lyte for his active interest as well as his vote. The active interest took the form of an electioneering poem, based upon the fact that blue was the Tory colour, and running thus:

“ Oh, blue are the heavens above,  
And blue is the deep rolling sea,  
And blue melting eyes are the eyes that we love,  
Yes, blue is the colour for me.”

It is said that the poem saved the seat for the party; but that is as it may be. It differs widely at any rate from the poem with which its author's name is more generally associated. That poem we owe to the breaking of his health, and his sensitive dread of death.

For years he had struggled with consumption, keeping himself alive by wintering abroad. At last he felt that the struggle was nearly over; and so—one takes the story from a contribution by “ A Devonian ” to the *Pall Mall Magazine*:

“ One Sunday morning in the September of 1847—it was the last day that he was ever to spend at Brixham—he announced at breakfast that he intended to preach for the last time to

his flock; and though the loving counsels of his family tried to dissuade him, he made his way to the church up the steep ascent, and did as he had resolved. After the service he returned home, and we may be sure that he must have looked back affectionately at the little town with its slate roofs shining in the sun, and the smacks lying peacefully in the harbour with all their sails furled for the Sunday rest. That evening, in his quiet study at Berry Head, he wrote the well-known hymn, and composed a little air adapted to the words, both of which he gave to a near and dear relative, who treasured them safely. A few hours later he set out for the South of France. The invalid halted for a while at Avignon and Aix, and died at Nice on November 20th.

“Much as he had feared death, it came to him at last, robbed of all its terrors, and he passed quietly away, murmuring, ‘Peace—Joy’”:

“ I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless :  
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness :  
Where is death’s sting ? Where, grave, thy victory ?  
I triumph still if Thou abide with me.”

The hymn is still sung throughout the English-speaking world; and there is a special pathos in the fact that it was sung for the first time by the Brixham fishermen on the day on which they were told the news of its author’s death.

## V

### TOTNES

The arrival of Brutus—The wrestling match with the giant—The self-made men of Totnes—Benjamin Kennicott — William Brockedon — The Herrick country

THE associations of Totnes touch a more remote antiquity than those of any other Devonian town.

Ordinary English history begins, as we all know, with the invasion of Julius Cæsar, who discovered that Britain was inhabited by Britons—primitive people who painted themselves blue and ran wild in woods. But who were those Britons? Why were they so called, and where did they come from? That delightful old chronicler, Geoffrey of Monmouth, tells us. The Britons, it seems, were also invaders—the followers of Brutus, so called by him because “by these means he desired to perpetuate the memory of his name.” But who was Brutus?

Brutus, we gather, was the grandson of that “pious Æneas,” of whom we read in Virgil:



the pious Æneas who, after the siege of Troy, sailed to Italy and founded Rome. He had to leave Italy because he had accidentally killed his father, Ascanius, in the hunting-field. He had various adventures in Greece, Spain, and France. Ultimately he got to England, and decided that England was the best country to live in; and the part of England which gave him this pleasant impression was Devonshire. He landed, says Geoffrey, "on the coast of Totnes"; though whether this means that Totnes was then at the mouth of the Dart, or that the name of the town was also the name of the country round about it, remains uncertain, and does not greatly matter.

"The island," Geoffrey proceeds, "was then called Albion, and was inhabited by none but a few giants"; but "the plenty of rivers abounding with fish and the engaging prospect of its woods made Brutus and his company very desirous to fix their habitation in it." So they set to work to kill off the giants; and the last of them was killed in a famous single combat. His name was Goemagot—the original form of Gogmagog—and he was "a detestable monster, in stature twelve cubits, and of such prodigious strength that, at one shake, he pulled up an oak as if it had been a hazel wand." Against him was pitted Corineus, from whom Cornwall is supposed to take its name, described as "a modest man in matters of council and

of great courage and boldness." Let old Geoffrey tell us about the encounter:

"At the beginning of the encounter, Corineus and the giant, standing front to front, held each other strongly in their arms, and panted aloud for breath; but Goemagot presently grasped Corineus with all his might, broke three of his ribs, two on his right side and one on his left. At which Corineus, highly enraged, roused up his whole strength, and snatching Goemagot upon his shoulders, ran with him, as fast as the weight would allow him, to the next shore, and there, getting upon the top of a high rock, hurled down the savage monster into the sea; where, falling on the sides of craggy rocks, he was torn to pieces, and coloured the waves with his blood."

So formidable are Cornish wrestlers; and, though the scene of the match is said to have been Plymouth Hoe, the hero of it may be claimed by Totnes; and the feat would suffice to make Totnes famous, even if Totnes men had never done anything since. But they have done a great deal since; and Totnes is famous for a great many things.

In Anglo-Saxon times, we find the town famous for its Mint,—no numismatical collection is complete without a supply of Totnes pennies. In Stewart times, we find it contributing a Minister to Charles II's cabal. On the arrival

of William III, we find a haughty Sir Edward Seymour in Berry Pomeroy Castle—a Seymour even prouder of himself than of his family, as he showed in conversation with the King. “I believe you are of the family of the Duke of Somerset?” his sovereign asked him. “Pardon me, sire. The Duke of Somerset is of *my* family,” was the reply.

Still, on the whole, Totnes is less famous for the scions of its ancient houses than for its self-made men; the two most notable of them being the sons respectively of a Totnes barber and of a Totnes watchmaker.

The barber’s son was Benjamin Kennicott, the Hebrew scholar, who passed on from Totnes Grammar School to a scholarship at Wadham College, and a fellowship at Exeter College, Oxford. He would have had a harder struggle—and perhaps a less successful one—in these days of open competition. Some lad, less clever but better trained, might have beaten him in the examination. As it was, private patrons, perceiving his intelligence, pushed his fortunes, and his achievements justified their patronage. He became, not only a Hebraist himself, but the cause of Hebraism in others,—among those others being his own wife.

She was of good family—an excellent match for the country barber’s son—being sister-in-law to the Provost of Eton; and one meets her in Fanny Burney’s Diary. “She was,” says

Fanny, "famous by having studied Hebrew after marriage in order to assist her husband in his edition of the Bible; she learnt it so well as to enable herself to aid him very essentially in copying, examining, and revising."

A feat which shows an admirable zeal, and should be held up to the notice of the wives of literary husbands. One is glad to think that other scholars besides her husband showed their enthusiasm for Mrs. Kennicott by remembering her in their wills; Bishop Barrington leaving her an annuity of £100, and Bishop Porteus bequeathing to her, as his "dear and pleasant friend," the sum of £500 invested in the Three per Cents.

So much of the Totnes barber's son, who was never a barber himself. The famous Totnes watchmaker's son, whose name was William Brockedon, was actually himself, for some time, a watchmaker. He helped to make the Totnes parish clock—"cutting," he has related, "the fly-pinion out of the solid steel"; and he kept his father's shop, for his mother's benefit, for five years after his father's death. Presently, however, he too, like Benjamin Kennicott, found a patron. Archdeacon Froude—the father of James Anthony Froude, whom we shall meet at Salcombe—discovered that he was an artist, predicted that he would succeed, and packed him off to London in 1809.

He did succeed, not only in art, but in litera-

ture as well. His most famous book is his illustrated account of *The Passes of the Alps*, for the preparation of which he crossed the great mountain barrier between Switzerland and Italy no fewer than fifty-eight times by forty different routes; and he was also one of the contributors to the first edition of Murray's *Handbook for Switzerland*—that famous first edition which is treasured by all Alpine climbers, because it is so rude to them, deprecating the ascent of any peak more formidable than the Rigi, and declaring that nearly all the climbers who have got to the summit of Mont Blanc have been of unsound mind: a truly remarkable sentiment, though whether it is Brockedon's or Murray's own one does not know.

Another illustrious Devonian who has been claimed by Totnes is Charles Babbage, the inventor of the calculating machine. As a matter of fact Babbage was born, not at Totnes, but at Teignmouth; but as we passed Teignmouth without mentioning him, we may pause here to recall an incident in his career, which has an interest of its own, though it is entirely unconnected with his mathematical or statistical achievements.

The British Government, it will be remembered, subsidized Charles Babbage in order that he might study mechanisms suitable for his calculating purposes. In the course of his travels he went, as most of us do, to Paris; and in

Paris he fell in love—as perhaps a good many of us have also done. The object of his affections was the fair but frail Hortense Allart de Méritens; and his affair with her is worth recalling because he had two rivals, both illustrious men. One of them was the great French author and statesman, Chateaubriand; the other Lord Lytton's brother, Sir Henry Bulwer, afterwards Lord Dalling. One would like to be able to add that it was the Devonian who bore off the prize; but that one cannot do without tampering with the truth. Charles Babbage, alas!—and Chateaubriand also—sighed in vain; while Hortense went off with Henry Bulwer for a honeymoon at the little watering-place of St. Valéry-sur-Somme—a remote village, at the back of beyond, where there was little chance of his meeting anyone who knew him.

But that is enough of Babbage. Having saluted him in passing, we will stroll out a little way into the country, and meet another man of Devon who was not indifferent to female charms, but, on the contrary, rather more susceptible to them than his calling should have suffered him to be: to wit, that charming poet, the Reverend Robert Herrick.

Truly it is difficult to realize and visualize Robert Herrick as Parson Herrick, the West-Country Vicar. It is not merely that he had knocked about town rather more than the general run of vicars before taking Orders. It is also

that, in an age in which many West-Country vicars were worldly, his worldliness did not run upon West-Country lines. The typical worldliness of the West-Country parson of the period is held up to derision in one of his own epigrams:

“ Old Parson Beanes hunts six days of the week,  
And, on the seventh, he has his notes to seek.  
Six days he holloas so much breath away  
That, on the seventh, he can nor preach nor pray.”

That is all the world knows of Parson Beanes. Parson Herrick, Vicar of Dean Prior, on the edge of Dartmoor, not far from Totnes, evidently regarded him as his inferior, alike in piety and in intellect. His own passion, as his writings testify, was for the pursuit, not of the fox, or even the hare or the otter, but the petticoat; and the curious thing is that he seems only to have indulged the passion in fancy, but never actually to have done anything calculated to scandalize the weaker brethren. It is impossible, of course, as it always is, positively to prove the negative; but the presumption which can be established in favour of it is strong. For the weaker brethren are not a silent folk, but can be relied upon to talk scandal whenever there is any scandal to talk. Parson Beanes, we may be sure, finding himself scarified in the quatrain quoted above, would have been quick to grasp any handle that Parson Herrick might have

given him; and whatever Parson Beanes said about Parson Herrick would have been quoted at all the women's parties up and down the neighbourhood, with the result that Julia and Anthea and the others would have found their respective parishes too hot to hold them. In short, if Parson Herrick's life had run a parallel course with Parson Herrick's poems, the West Country would, to this day, have been full of shocking stories to his discredit.

But it is not. The antiquary's difficulty at Dean Prior is to collect any stories whatsoever about Parson Herrick; and the most diligent research has, so far, brought only two stories to light—stories, too, which have not a single petticoat between them. The first story is to the effect that Parson Herrick kept a pig, and trained it to drink ale out of a tankard; and there is no great harm in that. Ale flowed so freely in the West Country at the period that it was well for the temperance cause that some of it should be drunk by the lower animals. The other story is that Parson Herrick, finding his congregation inattentive, hurled the manuscript of his sermon at their heads in order to wake them up; and that too seems an innocent, albeit an unusual, proceeding. There are sermons for which it might be difficult to secure attention by any less drastic means: the famous sermon, for instance, in which President Routh of Magdalen was heard saying to the bumpkins of Loamshire:



"At this point, my brethren, you will doubtless object to me in the words of Irenæus . . . etc." But, of course, one does not know whether Parson Herrick's sermons were of that character or not.

By his parishioners, at any rate, Herrick seems to have been thought of primarily as a parson, and only secondarily as a poet. They knew, at Dean Prior, that he was a good parson who gave freely out of his comparative abundance; whether he was a good poet they did not venture to decide. They could no more distinguish between different kinds of poetry than between different systems of metaphysics or the different dialects of ancient Greece. Some of them, it is true, had some of Herrick's verse by heart (though how they came to get it by heart no one knows), and found the same sort of comfort in it that the old lady in the story found in the word "Mesopotamia"; but the meaning of it was as shadowy to them as the meaning of "Mesopotamia" was to her. The oldest inhabitant of Dean Prior—a lady in the ninety-ninth year of her age—was once questioned on the subject by a *Quarterly* reviewer. She said that she had always thought that Parson Herrick's poems were prayers, and had always treated them as such, sitting up in her bed, with her hands clasped in a devotional attitude, and reciting them in the watches of the night whenever she felt in trouble about her soul. One

likes to picture the old dame thus crooning the poet's stanzas to Anthea who Might Command him Anything. One can imagine the hostility to Rome which she would have thrown into the lines:

" Bid me to live, and I will live,  
Thy Protestant to be ! "

Even the poems in which Herrick derided Devonshire in general and Dean Prior in particular seem to have given very little offence to his parishioners. They knew that he had charged them with " warty incivility," and had vowed, when Cromwell turned him out of his living, that he would never return. But then he did return; and that was sufficient proof that he had not really meant any of the hard things he had said of them. The charm of the West Country had conquered him in spite of himself, and without his knowledge; and therefore he could be forgiven even by those whom he had spoken of as:

" A people currish, churlish as the seas,  
As rude almost as rudest savages."

The West Country, it seems, is of that forgiving temper

## VI

### SALCOMBE

The Froude country—Archdeacon Froude—Richard Hurrell Froude—James Anthony Froude

AT Salcombe we are in the Froude country—the country, at any rate, of James Anthony Froude, the greatest and most famous of the Froudes.

He was born at Dartington, near Totnes, and was sent to school at Buckfastleigh. For a brief period, before he found his religious bearings, he was a curate at Torquay. But it was at Salcombe that he owned property, and spent his last years, and died, and was buried; so that it is at Salcombe that one most naturally stops to speak of him. His celebrity and achievements overshadow those alike of his father, the Archdeacon of Totnes, and of his brother, the Tractarian leader; but they, too, are interesting; and we have to picture the future historian growing up under their domineering influence before presuming to assert himself and become an influence in his turn.

One knows the Archdeacon chiefly from Mr. Paul's Life of his son; and the picture which Mr. Paul has drawn of him is that of a man more distinguished than agreeable, though the distinction was only local, and the title to distinction not particularly well founded. He was a clergyman of a well-known type, more common in the past than in the present: a squire as well as a parson; a better sportsman than scholar; a Tory, a landowner, and a Justice of the Peace; "a personage in the county as well as a dignitary of the Church." We all know the type. It is not a bad type; but it has the defects of its qualities. Archdeacon Froude had them in an exasperating degree.

He was an Oxford passman, lifted into a position in which he was not only entitled, but expected, to lay down the law. Being a man of strong character, he laid it down without qualms or misgivings—not only laid it down, indeed, but enforced it, when he could, with the authoritative severity of a county magistrate. In particular, he adopted that course with regard to those religious problems which arose in the years of his ministry. It did not occur to him to think about them—he was under the impression that he knew. He was also under the impression that all persons placed under his jurisdiction ought to take their religious opinions from him. Just as it was forbidden to speak evil of dignitaries, so, he felt,

it was preposterous, and almost impious, to contradict Archdeacons. And that, of course, is a frame of mind which tends to widen instead of bridging the inevitable gap between the points of view of the generations.

The Archdeacon's sons hardly dared to contradict him in words; but they did so in thought and act. They had intellect as well as character, whereas he had only character. They could not take the antique line that religion meant the Christian religion; that the Christian religion meant the Protestant religion; and that the Protestant religion meant the religion of the Church of England as by law established. They were too religious to do so. They tried to realize their religion instead of taking it for granted; and the attempt caused them to diverge widely, though in opposite directions, from the speculative paths which the Archdeacon had prescribed for them. It was the old story of the Ugly Duckling; only, in this case, there were two Ugly Ducklings, though one of them was considered uglier than the other.

The less ugly of the two (as it seemed to the Archdeacon) was Richard Hurrell Froude, the Tractarian.

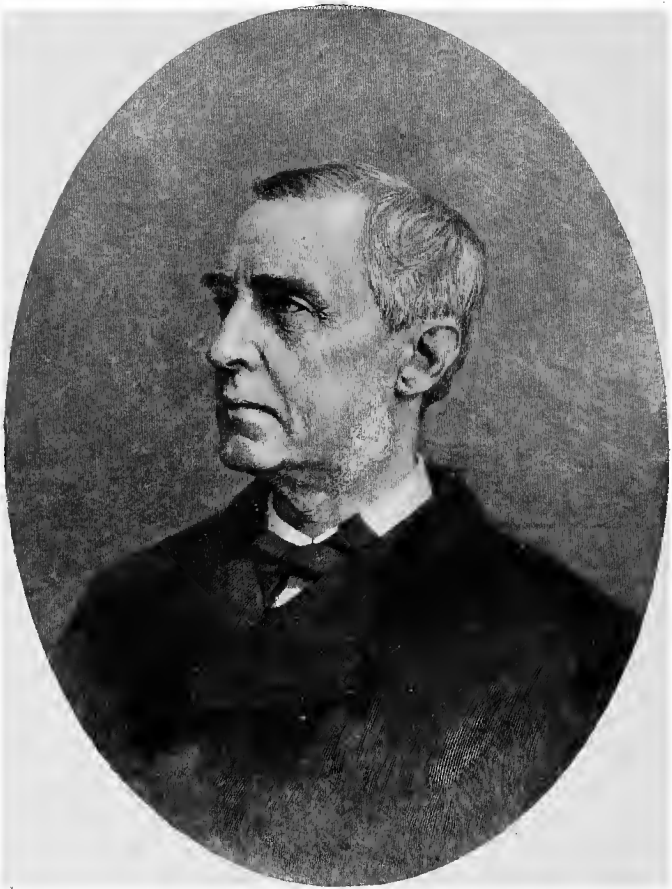
Whether that Oxford Movement, of which he became the guiding light, stirred the Church of England for good or for evil is too vast and thorny a question to be embarked on here.

The point which a Devonian notes with pride is that Richard Hurrell Froude was as conspicuous a figure in the marshalling of its forces as Drake was in the repulse of the Armada, and that he took the lead in it in virtue of the qualities which he inherited from his father.

He had all his father's character, and more than his father's intellect. Consequently, while his opinions differed from his father's, his attitude towards them was the same. He laid down the law in precisely the same dictatorial county gentleman style. "I do not see," he once said to his Tractarian associates, "why we should conceal from ourselves the fact that we are dictating to the clergy of this country"; and, of course, if a movement is to make headway, there must be a man among its organizers capable of approaching the subject in that Napoleonic temper. But for Richard Hurrell Froude, the Oxford Movement might have come to very little. He was "the bright and beautiful Froude"—the born leader of men, putting heart into his little company of saints and students,—the man whom one pictures saying: "Here is something movable—let us have a Movement. Here is a ball—let us set it rolling."

That is why Devonshire is proud of him: because Oxford, like Queen Elizabeth, had to "send for a Devonshire man" in order to get a difficult job done cleanly. He had done it





JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE.



before he died, though consumption killed him at the pathetically early age of thirty-three.

James Anthony Froude, the really Ugly Duckling of the family (in the Archdeacon's view), was Richard Hurrell's baby brother; and there is no denying that Richard Hurrell used to bully him. On one occasion he pitched him out of a boat into deep water in order to see if he could swim. On another occasion he took him by the heels and, holding him face downwards in the river, stirred the mud at the bottom with his head. He also frightened him by telling him that a bogey lurked for him in the hollow behind the house, even going so far as to give the bogey a name. In short, he did his best (though perhaps not knowing what he did) to crush the spirit out of the boy; and neither he nor the Archdeacon ever suspected that the lad who was thus being persecuted would turn out to be the one man of genius of the family. The Archdeacon, indeed—an Oxford passman, be it repeated—thought so poorly of the future historian of the Reformation that he threatened to bind him apprentice to a tanner.

That threat, however, was not carried out, and Froude followed his brother to Oxford. He was a commoner of Oriel, and afterwards took one of those close fellowships at Exeter, now abolished, founded by good Bishop Stapledon for the exclusive use of scholars of his diocese. In due course, he was ordained a deacon of the

Church of England,—that being a condition of the continued tenure of the fellowship; and the Archdeacon was conciliated and believed that his son was really turning out well. A friend of the family had predicted that he would grow up to be a bishop; and that was just the sort of success in life that the Archdeacon could understand and value. The Torquay curacy belongs, of course, to this period; but Froude's tenure of it was shortly followed by "shocking revelations."

Froude, though in deacon's orders, could not see his way to take priest's orders. To do so, he would have to subscribe the XXXIX Articles. Nor was that all. It also came to the ears of the Archdeacon that he had written a disgraceful book—a book so disgraceful that it had been publicly burnt in the Hall of his own College. Whereupon the Archdeacon, as Mr. Paul puts it, "conceiving that the best remedy for free thought was short commons, stopped his son's allowance."

The book which caused this trouble was, of course, *The Nemesis of Faith*; but, as for the story of its having been publicly burnt in the Exeter College Hall, that is a legend elaborately embroidered upon a very scanty foundation of fact. The present writer's tutor at Exeter, the Rev. Charles Boase—another conscientious objector who had never advanced from deacon's to priest's orders—was a witness

of the scene, such as it was; and the naked facts, as he revealed them, amounted to very little.

Sewell, afterwards Warden of Radley, a tutor of the College at the time, digressed from the subject on which he was supposed to be lecturing in order to denounce the work. He enquired whether any member of his class possessed a copy of it; and when a copy was produced—it was not the copy belonging to the Rev. Charles Boase—he pitched it into the fire and thrust at it viciously with the poker until it was consumed to ashes. That was all,—there was no formal *auto-da-fé*; but what happened next was more serious. The Rector and Fellows of Exeter informed Froude that, if he did not resign his fellowship, he would be forcibly deprived of it. The Visitor of the College, who was no other than the formidable Henry of Exeter, applauded them as men who had done a noble deed.

When Parson Jack Russell had a difference with the same imperious prelate, he made bold to say to him: "Come, come, my lord. Your lordship can't come Henry of Exeter over me." Froude was in no position to say that. He handed in his resignation, and then went on a long visit to another Devonian, Charles Kingsley, at Ilfracombe. He married Kingsley's sister-in-law, and became, first, a journalist, and afterwards an historian. Rather more than forty years later, the University which had cast him

out welcomed him back as Regius Professor of History. He owed the appointment to Lord Salisbury, whom no one ever suspected of heterodox inclinations; and he succeeded Freeman, who had denounced him, over and over again, as an ignoramus.

Freeman was a Somersetshire man; and we may, if we like, regard the duel between the two historians as a duel between the bordering counties. If we do so regard it, then we may fairly claim that Devonshire came off best in the encounter. Froude's history was readable; being readable, it was read; and being read, it influenced contemporary thought. It belongs to literature; it is the greatest of all the Devonian contributions to prose literature. Freeman is chiefly remembered as the *Saturday* reviewer who tried in vain to stop its sale by shouting from the housetops that it was worthless.

He shouted at it from the point of view of a High Churchman who regarded Protestants as poisonous; but it is largely as a Protestant manifesto that it is valuable. Froude rediscovered the Reformation at a time when Tractarians and their High Church successors were in a conspiracy to poohpooh and belittle it. He showed how all modern history hinged on it; how freedom of thought dated from it; how English independence was due to it. That is to say, he linked up Henry VIII divorcing

Katharine of Arragon with Drake singeing the King of Spain's beard in Cadiz Harbour and drumming his galleons up the English Channel. And all that in a vital prose which really gives us a moving picture of the past.

It can be argued, of course, that Froude's reading of his period was wrong; but it cannot be argued that his treatment of it was dull. That is the difference between his work and that of such historians as the learned and estimable Stubbs. When, at a public banquet, a chairman who took literature for granted instead of studying it, congratulated Stubbs, whose health he had to propose, on having "set forth the facts of English history in a light and entertaining manner," the roof rang with the inextinguishable laughter of the guests. He might have paid Froude the compliment with justice, and it would have been received with applause. For whereas Stubbs wrote history as if he were conscientiously discharging a painful duty, Froude wrote it like a man who had both a story to tell and a message to deliver. Hence the dust of conflict.

One may add that Froude was an open-air man, and wrote like one. He sailed the Devon seas, and climbed the Dartmoor hills; he shot partridges and fished with a dry-fly. No horse could throw him, and no storm could make him sea-sick. He loved sport, though he did not waste himself on games; and he loved

travel. His "escape from life" was in these things rather than in literature, though he was a man of letters to the finger-tips,—a man who, whatever happened to him, must take pen and paper and "express himself." He first tried to express himself in a novel which he afterwards spoke of as "a cry of pain"; but his history, too, is largely an exercise in self-expression, in spite of the labour in archives which went to the making of it.

The novel—*Shadows of the Clouds*—expressed the sorrows of his childhood and of an unfortunate love affair. It was an undergraduate episode, an incident of a reading-party, which lasted for six months. At the end of that period an old-fashioned father put his foot down in the old-fashioned way on what he regarded as his daughter's unfortunate entanglement; and the engagement was broken off. Froude was so dismayed that he threw his books away and refused to do another stroke of work; and his disappointment consequently cost him his "first." It seemed hardly worth while to work for a "first" if he could not lay it at the feet of the one woman in the world who mattered to him. He let things go, only took a "second," and presently gave great offence by putting the story into a book. He could not help it—he had to express himself. It was a great surprise to him that other persons who were implicated in his narrative felt annoyed.

*The Nemesis of Faith* was, similarly, an essay in self-expression under the influence of religious perplexities. That cost Froude, as we have seen, his fellowship and his allowance; so we may fairly assume that the temptation to it was compelling. The penalty, at any rate, did not cure him of the habit; and happily, though the habit was continued, the penalties were not repeated. On the contrary. The self-expression becoming more impersonal and indirect, it was recognized as the chief charm of his work that Froude did express himself instead of writing as the scribes,—such scribes as Stubbs and Gardiner, for instance, who kept their noses to the grindstone, and brought rather less individuality to the writing of history than a parlourmaid brings to the laying of a dinner-table.

The self-expression, however, was never so complete as to leave no room for curiosity. There always remained the impression of a man of interesting temperament who, though he was always himself a part of what he wrote, yet gave only tantalizing half-glimpses of himself, and guarded the secret of his real attitude towards the unseen things and the ultimate problems. Had he solved them, albeit in a different sense from the old women and the archdeacons? Or had he dismissed them as insoluble? And, if he had dismissed them as insoluble, what faith sustained him?

His soul dwelt apart; and, as a rule, he kept

silence on these matters, letting the world make what it chose of his saying that "Bishops have produced more mischief in this world than any class of officials that have ever been invented." But though he had little faith in bishops, and none whatever in Henry of Exeter, he nevertheless had his *credo*; and he once spoke out, in a letter to a member of his family who had written to him, distraught by religious doubt. This is a part of what he said:

"Religion to me is not opinion—it is certainty. I cannot govern my actions or guide my deepest convictions by probabilities. The laws which we are to obey and the obligations to obey them are part of my being of which I am as sure as that I am alive. The things to argue about are by their nature uncertain, and therefore it is to me inconceivable that in them can lie *Religion*. I cannot tell whether these thoughts will be of any help to you. But it is better, in my judgment, to remain a proselyte of the gate—resolute to remain there until one receives a genuine conviction of some truths beyond—than for imagined relief from the pain of suspense to take up by an act of will a complete system of belief, Catholic or Calvinistic, and insist to one's own soul that it is, was, and shall be the whole and complete truth. Some people do this—deliberately blind their eyes, and because they never see again declare



loudly that no one else can see. Other people, less happy, find by experience that they cannot believe what they have taken to in this way, and fly for a change to the next theory and then to the next. I remain for myself unconvinced of much which is generally called the essential part of things; but convinced with all my heart of what I regard as essential."

All that, of course, has very little to do with Devonshire; but equally of course one would not trouble to write a book about the men of Devon if the significance of their activities of thought and deed was only local—if the greatest of them did not belong to the world as well as to their county. And, even so, one may get back to the West Country at the end of the chapter, as Froude did at the end of his life. Just as the West Country moulded him in his youth, and gave him the standpoint from which he looked at English history, so he found balm and comfort in the West Country in the last years when the stormy journey was drawing to its close.

"Froude," Jowett said, voicing the ultimate opinion of Oxford, "is a man of genius. He has been abominably treated." Undoubtedly. But, in the West Country, the persecutions, whether of Henry of Exeter, or of the Rector and Fellows of Exeter, or of Beresford Hope of the *Saturday Review* and his tame gad-fly,

Freeman, ceased to matter to him. One may fitly end with the passage in which he says so, writing from The Molt:

"It is near midnight. I have just come in from the terrace. The moon is full over the sea, which is glittering as if it was molten gold. The rocks and promontories stand out clear and ghostlike. There is not a breath to rustle the leaves or to stir the painted wash upon the shore. Men and men's doings, and their speeches and idle excitement, seem all poor, transient, and contemptible. Sea and rocks and moonlight looked just as they look to-night before Adam sinned in Paradise. They remain—we come and go, hardly more enduring than the moth that flutters in through the window, and we are hardly of more consequence."

## VII

### DARTMOUTH

Men of peace—Thomas Newcomen and his steam-engine  
—Sir Humphrey Gilbert—" Lovable John Davis "

ONE may link Dartmouth with the wars if one wishes: with the naval battles of the Hundred Years War; with the scattering of the Armada; with the tussle between Cavaliers and Round-heads. With these events, however, other towns are more conspicuously associated. Dartmouth's greatest citizens have been men of peace; and the principal portraits which it contributes to our gallery are those of a great inventor and two great navigators.

The inventor is, of course, Thomas Newcomen; and one feels quite sure that his name will, at first sight, mean nothing at all to a great number of those who read this page. He invented the steam-engine, which James Watt only improved; but Watt got all the glory, and Newcomen's name is only preserved in the works of reference. If anyone wants to know why, it will be hard to tell him, unless he will accept the explanation that the Devonshire man

forgot to do anything picturesque—anything, that is to say, which cuts a pleasant figure in anecdote.

Watt, as we all know, sat by the fire and remarked the kettle on the hob, and wondered why the heating of the water caused the lid to wobble up and down; and most people believe that that was the origin of the discovery of the motive-power of steam. But it was not. Thomas Newcomen, of Dartmouth, could not only have told James Watt the reason of the kettle's puzzling vagaries, but could have shown him how to make a machine based upon its peculiar behaviour. He had himself made such machines, and they were already being used for the purpose of pumping water. The specifications of his patents are still to be seen at the Patent Office, and a copper-plate print of an engine which he built in 1712 was exhibited in a loan collection of scientific apparatus at South Kensington in 1876; but his name nevertheless remains obscure, and one does him justice with difficulty. A Dartmouth antiquary once identified his house, and pulled it down, and used the material for the building of another, to be called after him; but the search for anecdotal information has proved to be labour in vain.

One knows little about him except that he was born in 1663, and belonged to a family which had come down in the world. His grand-

father was a clergyman, a Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, the head master of a grammar school, and subsequently incumbent of Stoke Fleming, in our county, where the church contains a brass to his memory: a man important enough to have his corner in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The grandson was so obscure that it is not even known whether he was a locksmith, a blacksmith, or an ironmonger; but it seems more likely that he followed a trade than that he kept a shop, for mechanical genius is commoner at the bench than behind the counter. At any rate, he and another Devon man put their heads together.

But this other Devonian, who came from Brixham, is even more obscure than Newcomen. It is not known whether his name was Cawley or Calley, or whether he was a glazier or a grazier: a doubt which reminds one of the case of the youth in Gilbert's opera who was bound apprentice to a pirate in mistake for a pilot. It is said that Calley (or Cawley) "found the money" for the exploitation of the invention; but that, too, is uncertain. All that we can say positively is that it was duly patented, put on the market, and taken up, and that some improvements were added at the suggestion of an ingenious boy employed to mind the engine. We have an advertisement of it which intimates that:

"These are, therefore, to give notice that,

if any person shall be desirous to treat with the proprietors for such engines, attendance will be given for that purpose every Wednesday at the Sword Blade Coffee House in Birchin Lane, London."

That is all. When Newcomen died, he was given a line in the *Morning Chronicle* as "sole inventor of that surprising machine for raising water by fire"; but even those who had seen the machine at work did not foresee that the new motive power on which it depended was destined to change the face of industry throughout the world. We can do no more, therefore, than pay the inventor his homage, and pass on to our navigators.

First of the navigators is Sir Humphrey Gilbert: the central figure of that essay on *Forgotten English Worthies*, in which Froude announced his rediscovery of the glories of the Elizabethan age. His knighthood was the reward of merit; but he was nevertheless of gentle birth and upbringing—an Oxonian and an Etonian—a stepbrother of Sir Walter Raleigh. It is said to have been at his father's place, the Manor House, at Greenaway, some two miles up the Dart, that Sir Walter smoked his first pipe and was drenched with water (or, according to some authorities, with beer) by his servant, who suspected spontaneous combustion. Be that as it may, young Humphrey grew

up, accustomed to the sights and scents of the sea, in an age in which men knew but little of what lay beyond the sea; and he saw many ships float down the river and steer towards the setting sun—some of them returning, but not all. The desire to sail with them, or after them, became a part of him; but the time for its fulfilment was not yet.

He was a younger son, and had his way to make in the world. There was no real and regular navy in those days; the army was the recognized career for a young man in his case. We hear of him fighting the French, at Havre, under the Earl of Warwick; we meet him next in Ireland, fighting the rebels; we follow him presently to the Low Countries, where he fought the Spaniards. He won distinction, but he did not grow rich. On the contrary, there exists a letter of his in which he complains that, after twenty-seven years spent in the service of the Crown, he is reduced to destitution—living in fear of an execution being put into his house, and compelled to sell his wife's clothes from off her back.

But, all this while, Sir Humphrey was dreaming his dream of adventure on the high seas—and not dreaming only but also planning and contriving. He had a scheme to “annoy the King of Spain by fitting out a fleet of warships under pretence of a voyage of discovery,” and another and better scheme for “a discovery

of a New Passage to Cathay." The vision there, of course, was of that famous North-West Passage, which Martin Frobisher went to seek in his place; and then, at last, came the vision, which was to become a reality, of the colonization of Newfoundland.

The story of that memorable expedition is too long to be told here; but we must stop to pay our tribute to the spirit of the Dartmouth man who led it. He had to deal with the objections of those who represented that the enterprise was dangerous; and this is what he said:

"Give me leave, therefore, always to live and die in this mind: that he is not worthy to live at all that, for fear or danger of death, shunneth his country's service or his own honour, seeing that death is inevitable and the fame of virtue immortal, wherefore in this behalf *mutare vel timere sperno*."

It was a brave saying; and Sir Humphrey Gilbert lived bravely up to it, when he had, at last, raised the money for his undertaking, and sailed West, as he had seen so many men of Devon sail before him, in a fleet of which the largest vessel was only of two hundred and the smallest of no more than ten tons burden. He was one of the first of those who saw (or fancied that they saw) the Great Sea Serpent—"turning his head to and fro, yawning and gaping wide,



with ugly demonstration of long teeth . . . roaring and bellowing as doth a lion "; but he observed the monster with composure, and almost with delight, as Mr. Hayes, the passenger who chronicled the voyage, relates:

" What opinions others had thereof " (writes Mr. Hayes), " and chiefly the General himself, I forbear to deliver. But he took it for *Bonum omen*, rejoicing that he was to war against such an enemy, if it were the devil."

But the omen was not good, if we may test it by what followed. This first attempt at colonization was more bold than successful. No gold mines were discovered; and colonies without gold mines were, in those days, deemed of little value. Sir Humphrey, almost alone of the company, kept his good spirits; and the others suspected him in consequence of knowing more about the buried treasures of Newfoundland than he chose to tell them. They questioned him on the subject; but he only returned ironical, enigmatical answers of which they could make nothing. And so they started for home—Sir Humphrey on the little ten-gun *Squirrel*, and Mr. Hayes, who tells the story, on the *Golden Hinde*.

" The vehement persuasion of his friends " (says Mr. Hayes) " could nothing avail to divert him from his wilful resolution of going in his

frigate; and when he was entreated by the captain, master, and others, his well-wishers in the *Hinde*, not to venture, this was his answer, 'I will not forsake my little company going homewards, with whom I have passed so many storms and perils'."

And then the winds blew and the waves rose, the huge Atlantic billows tossing the little barques which we should nowadays think hardly strong enough for a coasting trade; and "we had also upon our mainyard an apparition of a little fire by night which seamen do call Castor and Pollux"; and then, in a memorable passage which still echoes down the ages:

"Monday, the ninth of September, in the afternoon, the frigate was near cast away, oppressed by waves, but at that time recovered, and giving signs of joy, the General, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, cried out unto us in the *Hinde*, so often as we did approach within hearing, 'We are as near to heaven by sea as by land,' reiterating the same speech, well beseeeming a soldier resolute in Jesus Christ, as I can testify that he was."

And then—last scene of all:

"The same Monday night, about twelve of the clock, or not long after, the frigate being ahead of us in the *Golden Hinde*, suddenly her lights were out, whereof, as it were, in a

moment we lost the sight; and withal our watch cried, 'The General was cast away,' which was too true."

Truly a vivid sea-scene, pictured by a simple-minded man, and a cheery story, never to be forgotten, of a brave man who looked death brightly in the eyes, and saw no terror in them. Comment can add nothing; so we leave Sir Humphrey, and pass on to his young friend, John Davis—"lovable John Davis," whom he must have known as a boy—who made his first voyage two years after Sir Humphrey had made his last, whose name is written on the Arctic maps in Davis Straits, and who also made a good end on the high seas far away from home.

Like Sir Humphrey, John Davis was of gentle birth. Unlike Sir Humphrey, he followed the sea from his youth; and possessed of an equal share of courage and enterprise with Sir Humphrey, he seems even to have excelled him in the qualities which mark a man out as bound to lead his fellows. Let us quote Froude's tribute:

"Brave as he was, he is distinguished by a peculiar and exquisite sweetness of nature which, from many little facts of his life, seems to have affected every one with whom he came in contact in a remarkable degree. We find men, for the love of Master Davis, leaving their firesides to sail with him, without other hope or motion;

we find silver bullets cast to shoot him in a mutiny; the hard, rude natures of the mutineers being awed by something in his carriage which was not like that of a common man."

Like Sir Humphrey, he dreamed of that North-West Passage which Frobisher had failed to find; and nothing could persuade him that it was not both discoverable and practicable. Obstacles did not deter him, and ice-barriers existed only to be overcome, though the burden of the ship in which he faced them was of little more than twenty tons. Though the icebergs and ice-floes did, in fact, bar his way, he argued that they were only accidental obstructions which another, more fortunate, might escape. The sea, he was still maintaining, ten years after his first voyage, is everywhere navigable, and "the air in cold regions is tolerable"; and he had great hopes even of the North Pole. "Under the Pole," he declared, "is the place of greatest dignity"; and he held clear views as to the climate and the inhabitants of that remote region of the world. The latter, he said:

"Have a wonderful excellency and an exceeding prerogative above all the nations of the earth . . . for they are in perpetual light, and never know what darkness meaneth, by the benefit of twilight and full moons."

Nor was it only to the North-West that Davis

steered. He also made voyages to the South and East. There is a story of his having navigated the Straits of Magellan, in a gale, by night, by a chart which he had made with the eye in passing up—those Straits of Magellan being sixty miles long, and less than three miles broad, and winding like a river,—the cables parted and the anchors lost. There are stories, too, of starvation, and of the ship being provisioned with “fourteen thousand dried penguins”—a most unsavoury substitute, one imagines, even for hard tack and salt junk. There are far more stories, in fact, than one can find space to tell.

The cruellest story of all is to the effect that, on his return from one of his perilous expeditions, John Davis found that his wife had taken a paramour, “a fugitive and dissolute person,” influential enough to procure the arrest of the returning navigator on some trumped-up charge. He cleared himself, with the help of Sir Walter Raleigh. His faithless wife died, and he sought another. Before leaving for his last voyage, he made a will, bequeathing a fourth of his “worldly goods” to Judith Harvard, “unto whom I have given my faith in matrimony to be solemnized at my return.” But that return was not to be.

The last voyage was to the East Indies; and the last scene of it is laid on the coasts of Borneo. Let us once more quote Froude:

“In taking out Sir Edward Michelthorne to India in 1664, he fell in with a crew of Japanese, whose ship had been burnt, drifting at sea, without provisions, in a leaky junk. He supposed them to be pirates, but did not choose to leave them to so wretched a death, and took them on board; and, in a few hours, watching their opportunity, they murdered him.”

A noble end, as we have said, though melancholy, seeing that he had taken the risk, with his eyes open, for the sake of humanity. And so it was, as Froude proceeds, with all these men:

“They were cut off in the flower of their days, and few of them laid their bones in the sepulchres of their fathers. They knew the service which they had chosen, and they did not ask the wages for which they had not laboured. Life with them was no summer holiday, but a holy sacrifice offered up to duty, and what their Master sent was welcome.”

And yet, when all that is said, one is glad to know—what Froude neglects to tell us—that the death of Master Davis was speedily avenged. Though the captain was taken unawares, and cut down, the crew rallied, and drove the pirates down into the cabin. They barricaded themselves there, and it was hard to get at them. But the master came along with

two demi-culverins, loaded to the muzzle with cross-bars, bullets, and case-shot, fired them through the bulkhead, and, with a single discharge, blew the entire piratical gang to smithereens.

## VIII

### PLYMOUTH

The Elizabethan age—Francis Drake—His triumphs—  
His failure and death.

THE golden age of Plymouth was, as we all know, the Elizabethan era. One could compile a list, of course, of naval blows delivered and naval assaults sustained, in times anterior to these—in the Hundred Years War with France, for instance; but the great period is the period of privateering on the Spanish Main, the singeing of the King of Spain's beard in Cadiz Harbour, and the drumming up the Channel of the Armada, proudly but prematurely termed Invincible. And the name which stands out above all other names is that of Francis Drake. Hawkins, Frobisher, Lord Howard of Effingham—none of these are to be forgotten; but it is round Drake that the romance of the epoch centres.

There was a single-hearted directness about Drake which we find in hardly any of his compeers. He combined the simplicity of the Puritan with the simplicity of the sailor. His



family had suffered from Catholic persecution; his father had fled to Plymouth from Tavistock to escape from the violence of a Catholic mob. Consequently he had his personal reasons for hating the "idolatry" of the Mass—associated as it was with the assertion of Spanish and Papal pretensions to dictate on English soil; and he could plunder and slay Spanish Catholics, not only with a clear conscience, but with religious enthusiasm, giving God the glory. And yet he did these things with chivalry, and even with humanity, sparing his prisoners, avoiding sacrilege, never allowing his men to "lay a hand, save in the way of kindness," upon a woman or a child. With the result that the Maroons and other native tribes in the far West welcomed him as a friend and a deliverer, and that the Spaniards themselves admired him as much as they feared him. He was El Draque to them: the Dragon of the Apocalypse. Spanish mothers frightened rebellious children with his name, as English mothers of a later date cowed their children with the dreaded name of "Boney"; but the Spanish grandees who had to surrender their swords to him never failed to put his modesty to the test with courtly compliments.

These things being so, one can imagine how wild and whole-hearted was the enthusiasm of Plymouth. It was a pious town; but there was no keeping Plymouth men in church when

Drake's ship happened to bring doubloons and ingots home from the West at church-time. They left their minister preaching to empty pews while they ran down to the harbour to greet him. He and they were in touch with those romantic realities of life which contrasted so glaringly with the atmosphere of intrigue and gallantry of Elizabeth's Court. Gold may be dross; but gold and adventure together always make a sure appeal to the imagination of mankind. So let us pause to quote a song from Mr. Alfred Noyes's "Drake: an English Epic": the song which the poet imagines wafted across the waters on the day of the departure of Drake's greatest expedition on his most memorable treasure-hunt:

"The moon is up: the stars are bright:  
 The wind is fresh and free!  
 We're out to seek for gold to-night  
 Across the silver sea!  
 The world was growing grey and old:  
 Break out the sails again!  
 We're out to seek a Realm of Gold  
 Beyond the Spanish Main.

"We're sick of all the cringing knees,  
 The courtly smiles and lies!  
 God, let Thy singing Channel breeze  
 Lighten our hearts and eyes!  
 Let love no more be bought and sold  
 For earthly loss or gain:  
 We're out to seek an Age of Gold  
 Beyond the Spanish Main.

“Beyond the light of far Cathay,  
Beyond all mortal dreams,  
Beyond the reach of night and day  
Our Eldorado gleams,  
Revealing—as the skies unfold—  
A star without a stain,  
The Glory of the Gates of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.”

There is no need to repeat the story of how Drake went “round the world and home again,” gathering in the Spaniards’ treasures as he went, cutting out their ships under the guns of their batteries, burning their towns, and emptying their stores—every schoolboy knows all about that. But there is one scene over which one must linger—partly for the pleasure of quoting yet again from Mr. Noyes—partly because of the light which it throws on Drake’s determined resolution. One refers, of course, to the scene of Doughty’s execution.

Doughty was, or had been, Drake’s best friend: one of a company of gentlemen adventurers who followed his flag, together with the sailor-men, under his orders. But Doughty was a traitor, intriguing against Drake behind his back, insidiously stirring up his men to mutiny, and so placing his success in instant peril. He thought he was safe because he had friends at Court, whose aims his intrigues were serving, and because, as he haughtily said, when threatened, “the gallows were for dogs, not

gentlemen." This close to the gallows where-on Magellan had hanged two mutineers who refused to pass the Strait which bears his name. So there, on the bleak coast of Patagonia, Drake overcame his hesitations, and called a court-martial on his flagship, and put Doughty on his trial for mutiny. "They that think this man worthy of death," he cried, when the verdict of guilty had been given, "let them with me hold up their hands"; and a forest of brown hands was lifted into the air; and then—we come to our quotation:

"There, with one great swift impulse, Francis Drake  
 Held out his right sun-blackened hand and gripped  
 The hand that Doughty proffered him; and lo,  
 Doughty laughed out and said, 'Since I must die,  
 Let us have one more hour of comradeship,  
 One hour as old companions. Let us make  
 A feast here, on this island, ere I go  
 Where there is no more feasting.' So they made  
 A great and solemn banquet as the day  
 Decreased; and Doughty bade them all unlock  
 Their sea-chests, and bring out their rich array.  
 There, by that wondering Ocean of the West,  
 In crimson doublets, lined and slashed with gold,  
 In brodered lace and double golden chains  
 Embossed with rubies and great cloudy pearls,  
 They feasted, gentleman adventurers,  
 Drinking old malmsey as the sun sank down."

A marvellous scene truly, here richly rendered, in the grand manner redolent of the spacious days. No thought of reprieve was in the mind

of either executioner or prisoner. The feast was merely the last tribute to what had been, but could no longer be, through the false friend's unpardonable fault. It only remained to show the world that their hearts, though sore, were stout, and that, where there was no turning back, they could go on to the end, without fear or faltering, without hatred or recriminations, but with the self-command, whether grave or gay, of gentlemen. And so the time dripped by, until—but one cannot hope to draw the picture as well as Mr. Noyes, in his rhythmical paraphrase of the old chronicles, has drawn it:

“ The long slow sigh of the waves  
That creamed across the lonely barrier reef  
All round the island seemed the very voice  
Of the Everlasting: black against the sea  
The gallows of Magellan stretched its arm  
With that gaunt skeleton and its rusty chain  
Creaking and swinging in the solemn breath  
Of eventide, like some strange pendulum  
Measuring out the moments that remained.  
There did they take the holy sacrament  
Of Jesus' body and blood. Then Doughty and  
Drake  
Kissed each other, as brothers on the cheek;  
And Doughty knelt. And Drake, without one word,  
Leaning upon the two-edged, naked sword  
Stood at his side, with iron lips, and eyes  
Full of the sunset; while the doomed man bowed  
His head upon a rock. The great sun dropped  
Suddenly, and the land and sea were dark;

And as it were a sign, Drake lifted up  
 The gleaming sword. It seemed to sweep the  
 heavens  
 Down in its arc as he smote, once, and no more."

It is in stories of that sort, told with that graphic touch, that the Elizabethan heroes live again for us. There are modern leaders of men of whom one feels sure that they would sacrifice their best friends as ruthlessly if they came similarly between them and their appointed tasks; but assuredly they would not do it with the same combination of sentiment and *mise-en-scène*. It was not for nothing that the age of the buccaneers was also the age of Shakespeare: an age when the dramatists really impressed the imagination of the people, because they occupied themselves, in the grand style, with dramatic things.

It is said that the incident set an ineradicable mark upon Drake's character: that he seemed thenceforward an embittered man, "difficult to reconcile." One can well believe it; one can well believe that the stern necessity thus laid upon him seemed to give him an additional grievance against Spain, and made him chancier of friendship, so that friendship might never clash with discipline again. Beyond a doubt, he lost his joviality, and became more than ever wrapped up in his mission: the mission not only of plundering the Spaniard's treasure-houses, but of sweeping the Spanish fleet off the sea.

By his conception of that necessity he lifted naval strategy on to a higher plane; and, in the matter of naval tactics too, he broke the old rules and established new ones. In the Cadiz raid, for instance, he had cautious advisers about him, old William Borough, of Bideford, Elizabeth's Comptroller of the Navy, among them; but when he called a council of war on board his flagship, it was not to ask his captains' opinions, but to tell them what he meant to do, and how they were to support him. To attack at Cadiz, Borough said, was suicide; but Drake attacked and triumphed, delaying the Armada for a year; and when old Borough remonstrated against a second enterprise which seemed to him too hazardous, Drake put him under arrest, and wrote home to Burleigh to say that he had done so, adding: "In persisting, he committeth a double offence, not only against me, but it toucheth further."

There is more of the real Drake, bullet-headed and masterful, in that story than in the famous anecdote of the game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe, and the swaggering boast that there would be time enough to finish the game and beat the Spaniards too. Time enough, as it turned out, there was; but the swagger, if the story be true, was swagger with a purpose. It was not in Spain only that the Armada was esteemed Invincible. Uneasiness prevailed along the coasts; and fluster might well have

turned uneasiness to panic. The light-hearted speech was the *mot de la situation*: the magnetic word which sent a thrill of confidence through all the crews of all the ships in the Queen's Navy. Nothing is more unlikely than that Drake really dawdled—he was not that sort of man. He got his ships out of the harbour in the teeth of the wind, and in plenty of time; and he hustled the Spaniards up the Channel, until the great storm took the business off his hands, and the famous medal could be struck: *Afflavit, et dissipati sunt*.

His great victory was the Battle of Gravelines, of which his biographer, Mr. Julian Corbett, writes that “though, by some strange freak of destiny, it is hardly known to the bulk of readers, it was at least as momentous as Waterloo or Trafalgar.” Even the street-boys of Spain knew it, and knew that the glory was Drake's, and called tauntingly under Medina Sidonia's window: “Drake is coming, Drake is coming.” His fame was so great that even failure could not touch it. Only his immediate lieutenants were jealous, hurt by his high-handed ways. To most of the men of Devon he was a leader for whom it was a joy and a privilege to go through fire and water. They laughed and applauded when, without leave from the lords of council, and as it were by a happy intuition, he commandeered sixty-five Dutch vessels to supplement his own







*Photo]*

THE DRAKE MEMORIAL.

*[Hawkins.*

Armada; and they flocked to Plymouth to volunteer for his service.

He led them, in the end, as the histories relate, to failure; the defeat of the Armada proving the climax of his personal triumphs, as it was also the climax of the glories of Queen Elizabeth's reign. The period itself is very disheartening to read about. The impression of our little world renewing its youth amid the surprising splendours of a Golden Age is gradually effaced as one follows its annals. The pessimism of Shakespeare's later plays is the contemporary reflection in literature of the feeling of disenchantment; and Drake's ultimate check in his last attempt to spoil the Spanish Main is one of the incidents through which we realize it.

His resources were inadequate to his task; the Spaniards let him wear himself out, stubbornly refusing to ransom open towns. He was already a baffled man when the fever of the pestilential swamps of Central America attacked him, and he raved deliriously until he sank into coma. He was so great, however, that the failure does not count in our estimate of his reputation, and is ignored altogether in the affection with which West Countrymen cherish his memory. His monument is in their hearts as well as on Plymouth Hoe. For them, when the news of his death reached them, he was not dead but sleeping; laid to his rest in Nombre

## 118 ROMANCE OF MEN OF DEVON

Dios Bay, but waiting to be called, and ready to come, when England needed him. England, they said, had but to keep his drum, and beat the call to arms. Mr. Newbolt has rendered the legend in a ballad which made him famous in a day:

" Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,  
    (Capten, art tha sleepin' there below ?),  
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,  
    An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.  
' Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,  
    Strike et when your powder's runnin' low ;  
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,  
    An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed  
        them long ago.'

" Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas  
    come,  
    (Capten, art tha sleepin' there below ?),  
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,  
    And dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.  
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,  
    Call him when ye sail to meet the foe ;  
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag's flyin',  
    They shall find him ware and wakin', as they found  
        him long ago."

## IX

### PLYMOUTH

Plymouth during the Civil War—Literature and the arts—Parson Hawker

WE turn from the *Golden Hinde* to the *Mayflower*; from the Plymouth buccaneers to the Pilgrim Fathers, who sailed from Plymouth Sound to Plymouth Rock, and made a New England, of a rather too hard, Puritanical type, on the other side of the Atlantic. But though we name them, we must not insist upon them; for Plymouth, though their port of departure, was not their place of origin. Those important pilgrims were East Anglians, not West Countrymen. Religious persecution had soured their tempers in a way in which it never soured the tempers of the men of Devon. They had many admirable qualities, but they lacked sweet reasonableness. The West Country claims to have produced a more amiable, more emotional, more mystical type of Puritanism; so the chronicler of the West Country waves them a farewell, and proceeds.

But Plymouth, nevertheless, contained a "right good fighting company" of Puritans, as

was amply proved when the Parliament took the field against Charles I. It was as loyal as Exeter, though to another cause, being the only town in the West which never wavered in its Parliamentary allegiance. The royalists understood its value and laid siege to it. It remained, almost without intermission, in a state of siege until the definite triumph of the Parliamentary cause; and there are stories of great barbarities committed by the beleaguering host. One reads, for instance, how Grenville forced prisoners whom he had taken to hang each other, in full view of the garrison, while he himself, sitting by on horseback, looked on and enjoyed the spectacle.

One also reads of the visitations of pestilence, the dread "camp disease," which may have been typhoid or typhus: the deaths from it, in the course of three years, exceeded the normal population of the town. On the other hand one finds gratifying records of the humanity and intrepidity of the women: "their courage in bringing out strong waters and all sorts of provisions in the midst of all our skirmishes and fights, for the refreshing of our soldiers, though many women were shot through the clothes." And, in the end, of course, Fairfax came marching down from Exeter to Totnes; and the royalists raised the siege in a hurry, and departed, leaving their guns and ammunition behind them; and the town took for its

motto, at once proud and humble: "*Turris fortissima est nomen Jehova*,"—a motto of which it boasts even more justly than Exeter of its "*Semper fidelis*." Nor did the restored Stewarts find it more tractable than their father; for when James II presumed to interfere with English religion, the Plymouth municipality was the first in England to declare for William of Orange, and its citadel was the first to open its gates to him.

So much of history. The time has come to see what Plymouth has done for literature and the arts; and here again, as with the Elizabethan explorers and warriors, we have a long list from which to make our choice. There are the painters, James Northcote, Samuel Prout, Benjamin Robert Haydon, Sir Charles Eastlake, and others; but we shall be speaking more particularly of painters in the chapter on Plympton and its grammar-school. In the list of poets two names stand out conspicuously, those of Mr. Austin Dobson, and Robert Stephen Hawker; and as this is not the place for the critical discussion, we will pay Mr. Dobson the compliment which is his due as a charming writer of delicately chiselled lyrics, and devote the remainder of this section to Parson Hawker, who is as famous for his eccentricity as for his poetry, albeit his poetry is his better title to immortal fame.

His father was a Plymouth doctor, who gave up medicine to take holy orders, and became so popular a preacher that galleries had to be added to his church in order to accommodate the multitudes who hung upon his words. Plymouth was the scene of the exploits which first drew attention to the future poet, though those exploits were only of the nature of practical jokes, and hinted nothing of the divine fire within. One of his feats was to break into a village doctor's stable, daub the doctor's horse with stripes of paint until it looked like a zebra, and then summon the doctor to start at once to attend an urgent case many miles away in the country. Another feat was to send forged orders to all the undertakers in Plymouth to call and measure two unpopular elderly ladies for their coffins. His purpose was to persuade those unpopular elderly ladies to leave the town, and he achieved it.

Whether there was genius in those jokes, each reader must determine for himself. The balance of opinion will probably be that jokes as brilliant have been played by persons who had no genius for anything else; and there was, at any rate, nothing in them which indicated a special genius for poetry. It may be added that there was no indication of a special genius for poetry even in the prize poem on "Pompeii," with which Hawker won the Newdigate at Oxford. It is not as good as the





ROBERT STEPHEN HAWKER.



prize poems of Dean Burgon and Father Faber who, if his superiors as ecclesiastics, were, in the end, infinitely inferior to him as poets. The great gift only came to him in those later days when he held the lonely cure of souls at Morwenstow, just over the Cornish border, on the edge of the Atlantic, with nothing but an expanse of troubled ocean between him and Labrador; and even so he never achieved in his lifetime the success which he deserved.

None the less, however, Morwenstow, thanks to Parson Hawker, is a place of pilgrimage: a pilgrimage which the present writer has made more than once, sharing the wonder of the majority of visitors to the village that any inhabitant of so remote a place ever commanded any success at all, or ever contrived to be heard of outside the parish.

For the truth is that the visitor—especially if he arrives out of the season—is tempted to doubt the existence of Morwenstow, and to say that he can find nothing on the alleged site but a deserted church in which an invisible vicar ministers to the spiritual needs of an imaginary population. He proceeds thither, over the cliffs, from Bude—a walk of seven miles—and probably does not meet a single human being on the way. Eventually he does discover the church and the parsonage, half-hidden in a hollow of the hills, with a splendid view of the Atlantic; but, unless it be Sunday, he searches in vain for any

actual or potential congregation. By wading through mire ankle-deep, scattering pigs and poultry before him as he goes, he may reach the front door of a farmhouse and enquire for the village; and the direction there given will bring him to the so-called village green. It is about five yards square; the number of houses adjacent to it is three; and this is the largest group of houses which the parish of Morwenstow contains. Leaving them behind, the visitor walks for many miles in a narrow lane bounded by high hedges. He may happen to meet a labourer mending the road, or an agriculturist conveying mangel-wurzels; it is just as likely that he will meet no one at all until, after a four miles' tramp, he strikes the high road to Bideford.

Such is Parson Hawker's country, and such is the isolation in which Parson Hawker lived and attained to fame. He was five miles from the nearest butcher's shop, and more than twenty miles from the nearest railway station; and there was no public conveyance to take him to either. For him to go to Exeter or Barnstaple was rather more trouble than it is for us to go to Paris. Not one of his neighbours was of his own social or intellectual standing. The greatest of them were small farmers, and the rest were agricultural labourers. And Parson Hawker lived in that solitude for practically the whole of his life, with no one to talk

to and with no checks upon his eccentricity. An educated man, condemned to such an existence, usually takes to drink. Parson Hawker in the end took to opium, though only in moderation; but that was not until quite late in his life. His first and chief relief from the tedium of existence was in eccentricity. By means of eccentricity he became a personage.

The common view of Parson Hawker is that he was a modest man who did not desire fame, but achieved it posthumously in spite of himself. As a matter of fact, he was very conscious of his powers, and very anxious that they should be recognized. It hurt him bitterly that he got no credit for his famous song, "And shall Trelawney die?" which Macaulay and Dickens attributed to some anonymous ballad-monger of the Jacobean period. "This," he wrote, "is an epitome of my whole life. Others have drawn profit from my brain, while I have been coolly relinquished to obscurity and unrequital and neglect." Evidently the man who wrote that complaint was not indifferent to celebrity, but desired "*digito monstrari et dicier hic est*"; and, if people would not point at him with their fingers as a poet, he resolved to give them some other reason for doing so. To that end—it is difficult to imagine any other motive—he gave a free rein to a gaudy fancy in the matter of his dress.

One of his favourite costumes was a poncho

—which is just a blanket, with holes cut in it for the arms. To bamboozle the curious, he told them that it was the garment of an Armenian Archimandrite; and he often wore it while riding about his parish on a mule. It is not on record that he wore the poncho anywhere outside the parish; but even when he travelled, he did not dress like other people. He was seen in the streets of Barnstaple in long wading-boots and crimson gloves; at his first wife's funeral he wore a pink hat without a brim; at a ruridecanal meeting he attired himself in a brown cassock with red buttons, girdled with a cincture, and, when upbraided by the assembled clerics, retorted hotly: "At all events, brethren, you will allow me to remark that I don't make myself look like a waiter out of place, or an unemployed undertaker, and that I do scrupulously abide by the injunctions of the seventy-fourth canon of 1603."

Such were the proceedings for which Parson Hawker was famous in his lifetime. Probably they stood in his way, and prevented him from obtaining preferment; probably his ecclesiastical superiors argued that whereas a comic Vicar of Morwenstow did not matter, a comic Dean or Archdeacon would make the Church itself ridiculous. Very possibly the argument was sound; and it is at any rate impossible to regret that Parson Hawker was never removed to any larger sphere of clerical utility. He

suited his surroundings, and his surroundings suited him. His eccentricities were harmless; he was an excellent parish priest; and though he sometimes revolted against the loneliness of his life, that loneliness was an essential part of his poetical education. He might still have written poetry if his lot had lain in the busy haunts of men; but it would never have had the sincerity and inspiration of the poetry which he composed in the hut of driftwood which he built himself on the face of the cliff, looking out on the Atlantic Ocean. There he dreamed daily—at last under the influence of opium—comforting himself with rhyme and rhythm; and though it is now thirty years since he died, Morwenstow still remembers and is proud of him.

## X

### PLYMPTON

The Grammar-school—The painters educated thereat—  
Sir Joshua Reynolds—James Northcote—Benjamin  
Robert Haydon

IN James Northcote's *Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, we read:

“It is worthy of remark that the county of Devon has produced more painters than any other county in England. Of that county was Thomas Hudson, the best portrait-painter of his day in the kingdom, and famous for being the master of Reynolds; also Francis Hayman, the first historical painter of his time; and Mr. Cosway, R.A., Mr. Humphry, R.A., Mr. Downman, Mr. Cross, all eminent in their profession. Of that county also was Sir Joshua Reynolds, eminent in the highest degree.”

There are other names to be added to the list: the name of Northcote himself; the names of Haydon and Eastlake; and the name of Thomas Rennell—a remarkable character to



whom Northcote devotes a footnote. He was of good family and great talent. The Duke and Duchess of Kingston offered him a room in their London house, and their patronage; but he was incorrigibly indolent—a man to whom it always seemed that achievement cost more trouble than it was worth. He settled at Dartmouth, and lived in poverty, being known “to lie in his bed for a week together, with no other subsistence than a cake and water.” When he had a little money, he bought anything that struck his fancy “though, by so doing, the necessaries of food and clothing were to be sacrificed”; and when he got a commission for a picture, he was considered to be working faster than usual if he finished it within twelve months. He is said to have discovered the art of fixing colours which tend to fade; but perhaps the most notable thing about him was his death-bed speech. He was asked whether he was suffering, and he replied:

“No; that they were such feelings as he could not describe, having never felt anything of the kind before.”

Rennell was an Exeter Grammar-school boy; but most of the painters enumerated were educated at the Plympton Grammar-school. It may safely be said that no school in the kingdom has turned out so many illustrious painters

as that of Plympton. That is its one title to fame; and we must pause to say a word about it.

Plympton Grammar-school ought to have been pretty much what Blundell's School, Tiverton, actually succeeded in being. Elize Hele, of Exeter College, Oxford, and the Inner Temple, Reader and Treasurer of his Inn, a childless man, like Peter Blundell, though not, like him, a bachelor, founded it, with the best intentions, and endowed it generously. After a certain amount of litigation between the executors and the heirs-at-law, it was opened in or about the year 1671. The West-Country gentry patronized it; and there was a brief epoch at which it was almost as well entitled as Blundell's to be styled "the Eton of the West."

But that epoch passed. After the fat years there were lean years—leaner and yet leaner years as time went on. The competition of the Plymouth schools may have been one cause of its failure; but foolish governors and incompetent head masters also helped to drag it down. The end was in sight when the educational tone was lowered by the premature suppression of the "good old fortifying classical curriculum" and fumbling experiments in teaching the boys things which would be "useful to them in after life"; but even before that date the inadequacy of the head masters had done irretrievable harm. Only one of them is re-

membered; and he is only remembered as the father of a famous son.

Samuel Reynolds was his name; and if any reasonable percentage of the stories told of Samuel Reynolds are true, then he was assuredly the most old womanly old woman who ever swung the birch or taught the Latin Grammar. He was one of the victims of Bampfylde Moore Carew, the king of the gipsies, of whom we shall be speaking in a moment, being persuaded to give that artful mendicant half a guinea at a time when half a guinea was the sum total of his worldly wealth. He was so absent-minded that "riding on horseback in a pair of gambados, he dropped one of them by the way without missing it." He was also by way of being an astrologer, and cast the horoscopes of his children; his faith in the dark art being confirmed by a curious coincidence. A great danger, astrology told him, would threaten the life of one of his children in its fifth year. In order to defeat the danger, he ordered that the little one should on no account be allowed to leave the house; whereupon its nurse, as if she felt that the reputation of astrology was at stake, dropped it out of an upper window, and so killed it.

Altogether, in fact, Samuel Reynolds, albeit a Fellow of Balliol, was a singularly simple-minded old gentleman, and one whose friends had every right to compare him, as they did

(and as Coleridge's schoolmaster-father was also compared), to Fielding's Parson Adams; but he was, for all that, the father of Sir Joshua Reynolds, though his absence of mind was such that he allowed Joshua to be entered in the baptismal register as Joseph; and he had sense enough to raise no difficulties when Joshua proposed to adopt the profession of a painter. Joshua, he said, should be bound apprentice to a painter or to an apothecary, as he preferred; and the upshot was that he paid a premium of £100 to have Joshua apprenticed to Hudson, another man of Devon, and the best painter, "for lack of a better," of his time. How Joshua went to London, and worked under Hudson, and quarrelled with him, and was afterwards reconciled to him, these are matters which it would take us too far afield to narrate.

In the grammar-school itself, it seems, Joshua left two interesting mementoes. He made some charcoal drawings on the walls of the passages; he cut his signature on one of the window-panes. But alas! A head master who was also an unscrupulous autograph-hunter removed the glass from its frame and added it to his collection. A head master who was also a Philistine had the decorated walls covered with a nice clean coat of whitewash. Devonshire, consequently, has no relic of its greatest painter's youth except some of his early paintings.

His first portrait was of the moon-faced tutor



SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.



of the first Lord Edgcumbe. He painted it in a boathouse at Cremyll beach, under Mount Edgcumbe, on a canvas which was part of a boat-sail, with the common paint used by shipwrights. When he returned to Devonshire, after his quarrel with Hudson, and when he made a second sojourn after his father's death, living with his unmarried sisters at Plymouth Dock, he painted several portraits, including that of "the greatest man of the place, the commissioner of the dockyard," at five guineas each. He stayed in the county until 1749, when he went to the Mediterranean with Commodore, afterwards Admiral, Keppel, finally settling, after two years in Italy, in London.

His London life, however, must not detain us. Enough to note that his genius was genial, and that he proved himself the most clubbable of men, one of the most popular members of *the* club, and the intimate companion of such men as Burke, Garrick, Goldsmith, Dr. Johnson, and Gibbon. "Assure Sir Joshua," we find Gibbon writing from Paris, "that I have not lost my relish for manly conversation and the society of the brown table." But his success in London never caused him to forget his birthplace. He regarded himself, not as a Londoner, but as a Devonian in London; and his native town appreciated the compliment, with the result that, even in his lifetime, he was a prophet in his own country.

In the summer of 1762, he brought Dr. Johnson to Devonshire, travelling from Exeter to Torrington, where one of his sisters lived, and thence, via Okehampton, to Plymouth. He drew the attention of the lexicographer to the delicacies for which the West Country is famous, and the lexicographer enjoyed them. This is how Northcote puts it:

“ On this occasion, the Doctor, who seldom showed much discretion in his feeding, devoured so large a quantity of new honey and of clouted cream, which is peculiar to Devonshire, besides drinking large potations of new cyder, that the entertainer found himself much embarrassed between his anxious regard for the Doctor’s health, and his fear of breaking through the rules of politeness, by giving him a hint on the subject.”

It was on that occasion, too, that a Devonshire lady grasped the opportunity of asking Dr. Johnson why he had defined “pastern” in his Dictionary as “the knee of a horse.” Whereupon the Doctor answered cheerily: “Ignorance, madam, sheer ignorance.” Another incident of the visit was a race which Dr. Johnson ran with a Devonshire maiden on the lawn of a country house, “kicking off his tight slippers high into the air as he ran, and, when he had won, leading the lady back in triumphant



delight." On the whole, however, it is not improbable that the lady let him win, not wishing to humiliate so great a man.

To the mass of the Devonians, no doubt, Dr. Johnson was an object of greater interest than Reynolds. He was a stranger—he came among them almost like a travelling circus—whereas they knew Reynolds already, and had known him as a boy. But the painter nevertheless was accorded one token of silent homage which the lexicographer did not receive. One must once again quote Northcote:

"It was about this time I first saw Reynolds, but I had seen several of his works which were in Plymouth (for at that time I had never been out of the county), and those pictures filled me with wonder and delight, although I was then very young; insomuch that I remember when Mr. Reynolds was pointed out to me at a public meeting, where a great crowd was assembled, I got as near to him as I could from the pressure of the people, to touch the skirt of his coat, which I did with great satisfaction to my mind."

Public homage, however, was to follow where private homage had shown the way. Plympton made Sir Joshua, in due course, successively a freeman of the borough, an alderman, and a mayor. "The Plympton folks," Samuel North-

cote wrote to James Northcote on that occasion, "are all on tiptoe ready for a dance, and surely Sir Joshua will not leave them without a ball." Whether he gave the expected ball or not, the correspondence does not make clear; but he did, at any rate, present the corporation with his portrait painted by himself; and Mr. Alcock, Vicar of Cornwood, composed a Latin epigram in commemoration of the event:

"Laudat Romanus Raphælem, Graecus Apellem:  
Plympton Reynoldem jactat utrique parem."

It was proposed that the epigram should be affixed to the portrait; but that, of course, Sir Joshua would not allow, being too great a man to be vain. The pride which he felt, however, in his municipal distinction, appears in another of Northcote's stories. The place was Richmond Gardens. The King and some of the Royal Family were there; and so:

"The King called to him, and told him that he had been informed of the office that he was soon to be invested with, that of being the Mayor of his native town of Plympton. Sir Joshua was astonished that so minute and inconsiderable a circumstance, which was of importance only to himself, should have come so quickly to the knowledge of the King; but he assured his Majesty of its truth, saying that it was an honour which gave him more pleasure

than any other he had ever received in his life; and then, luckily recollecting himself, added, 'except that which your Majesty was graciously pleased to bestow upon me'; alluding to his knighthood."

Northcote, of course, was not a painter of Sir Joshua's calibre; but he had to overcome far greater difficulties in order to follow his art. His father, a Plymouth watchmaker, had no sympathy whatever with his ambitions, and kept him in his shop, without money, in order to prevent him from going to London, in spite of the fact that Alderman Tolcher, of Plymouth, had promised him an introduction to Sir Joshua. He resolved to save money for the journey; but it took him several years to save five guineas. When he had saved the five guineas, however, he happily earned five more by the sale of a print of the new Plymouth Assembly Room and Bathing-place; and then he started, accompanied by his brother Samuel.

They walked nearly all the way, sleeping in ale-houses and hay-lofts, spending five days on the journey, and only taking the coach for the last stage. Samuel, we gather, was soon either timorous or home-sick. "When," we read, "they arrived at the hill which gave them the last view of the town, the elder brother looked back on it as he left, and expressed some regret; but the other lost sight of its spires

with a pleasure inexpressible." Samuel, in fact, only spent a week in London; but James settled down there, as Reynolds' *protégé*. He rose early, and coloured a sheet of birds for a print-seller before breakfast. This earned him a shilling, which sufficed for the day's material needs. The rest of his time he spent in copying the pictures in Reynolds' collection, until, at last, Sir Joshua, commending the qualities of his work, put him on the formal footing of a pupil who "lived in" and made himself generally useful in the studio. He was the only one of Sir Joshua's many pupils who made any considerable reputation of his own. It is said that he painted so life-like a portrait of Sir Joshua's housemaid that Sir Joshua's macaw—between which bird and the housemaid there was ill-feeling—flew at the canvas and tried to destroy it with beak and claws.

Northcote's *Life of Reynolds* has already been mentioned. He did for Reynolds—more or less—what Boswell did for Johnson, though his attitude towards his hero was less humble. It is through his work that we are able to realize Sir Joshua as a man as well as a painter, a very sociable and amiable man, but one who understood the art of getting on in the world, and was far from blind to the uses of advertisement. The trait appears particularly in what Northcote tells us of Sir Joshua's carriage—"a chariot on the panels of which were curiously

painted the four seasons of the year in allegorical figures ”:

“Having no spare time himself to make a display of this splendour, he insisted on it that his sister Frances should go out with it as much as possible, and let it be seen in the public streets to make a show, which she was much averse to, being a person of great shyness. . . . He knew that it would be enquired whose grand chariot this was, and that, when it was told, it would give a strong indication of his great success, and by that means tend to increase it.”

Northcote, on his part, was a much simpler man. He left Devonshire too late ever to lose his West-Country accent; and though his occupations carried him into society, he was never really fond of it. Nor were the angles of his character ever smoothed by marriage. Though he lived to a great age, he remained a bachelor, with a sister to keep house for him. He also remained a transplanted provincial and a Bohemian. Art and conversation were his great enjoyments; and he was satisfied to sit in the midst of dirt and untidiness, if only he might talk. He talked exceedingly well, expressing his opinions of his contemporaries with both wit and freedom; but he did not frighten those who conversed with him as did Dr. Johnson and even, in a less degree, Sir Joshua himself.

Even the aristocracy, it seems, were sometimes afraid of Sir Joshua, as the following anecdote, related by Northcote, shows:

"People had a great notion of the literary parties at Sir Joshua's. He once asked Lord B[essborough] to dine with Johnson and the rest, but, though a man of rank, and also of good information, he seemed as much alarmed at the idea as if you had tried to force him into one of the cages at Exeter Change."

With which picture it is interesting to contrast Hazlitt's description of his reception at Northcote's own house.

"The person whose doors I enter with most pleasure, and quit with most regret, never did me the smallest favour. I once did him an unlooked-for service, and we nearly quarrelled about it. If I were in the utmost distress, I should as soon think of asking his assistance as of stopping a person on the highway. Practical benevolence is not his *forte*. He leaves the profession of that to others. His habits, his theory are against it as idle and vulgar. His hand is closed; but what of that? His eye is ever open, and reflects the universe: his silver accents, beautiful, venerable as his silver hairs, but not scanted, flow as a river. I never ate or drank in his house; nor do I know or care how the flies or the spiders fare in it,

or whether a mouse can get a living. But I know that I can get there what I can get nowhere else,—a welcome, as if one was expected to drop in at just that moment, a total absence of all respect of persons, and of airs of self-consequence, endless topics of discourse, refined thoughts, made more striking by ease and simplicity of manner, the husk, the shell of humanity is left at the door, and the spirit, mellowed by time, resides within."

And now a word about a third Plympton Grammar-school painter, Benjamin Robert Haydon. As Northcote had been provided with an introduction to Reynolds, so Haydon had an introduction to Northcote. This is Haydon's narrative of his presentation of it:

"I was shown first into a dirty gallery, then upstairs into a dirtier painting-room, and there, under a high window with the light shining full on his bald head, stood a diminutive wizened figure in an old blue-striped dressing-gown, his spectacles pushed up on his forehead. Looking keenly at me with his little shining eyes, he opened the letter, read it, and with the broadest Devon dialect, said, 'Zo, you mayne to bee a painter doo-ee? What zort of painter?' 'Historical painter, sir.' 'Heestoricaul painter! why, yee'll starve with a bundle of straw under yeer head!'

"He then put his spectacles down and read

the note again; put them up, looked maliciously at me, and said, 'I remember yeer vather, and yeer grand-vather tu; he used to peint.' 'So I have heard, sir.' 'Ees: he peinted an elephant once for a tiger, and he asked my father what colour the inzide of 's ears was, and my vather told un reddish, and your grand-vather peinted un a vine vermillion.' "



## XI

### TIVERTON

Blundell's School—The story of Peter Blundell—The story of Bampfylde Moore Carew—The true moral of his life

AN account of Tiverton begins inevitably with Peter Blundell, who may be described as the Devonian Dick Whittington. If he did not climb the ladder quite so high as Dick, he started from a lower rung. He was a poor lad with a keen eye for the main chance; but also one who held his wealth, when he acquired it, in trust for worthy ends.

He grew up in the midst of clothiers; and he took a mental note of the fact that Tiverton was the cheapest market for cloth, and that London was the dearest; that there were purchasers in London for all the cloth that Tiverton could supply; and that the difference between the buying price and the selling price was more than the cost of carriage. The days of large transactions, long contracts, small profits, and reductions on taking a quantity had not yet dawned. Anyone who liked to buy cloth—

albeit only a single strip of cloth—at Tiverton and send it to London to be sold could make money. There was no difficulty about sending the cloth to London, for packhorses, laden with Tiverton cloth, were continually making the journey. For anyone who had the imagination to realize the fact, and the possibilities which it implied, the transaction was, as the Americans say, “as easy as pie.”

Peter Blundell had the necessary imagination. He saw that there was no earthly reason why the clothiery business should be monopolized by the clothiers already in possession, but that anyone might take a hand in the game if he had enough capital to buy one strip of cloth. The sum was not more than a boy could, with self-denial, save out of his wages. Peter denied himself, and saved the necessary capital, a penny at a time, engaged in the adventure, and made the profit on which he had reckoned. He further realized the elementary truth that if, instead of spending his profit in riotous living, he added it to his capital, he would be able to extend his business rapidly, seeing that the gain on the turnover was about cent per cent. So he continued to deny himself, and built up a large business, and went to London to attend to it, and gradually amassed what, in the sixteenth century, was reckoned an enormous fortune.

Any of the Tiverton boys—even the poorest of them—might have done it. Peter was merely





*Photo*

BLUNDELL'S SCHOOL.

*Mudford.*

the poor Tiverton boy who had the happy thought of doing it. There was no luck in the matter. Peter merely perceived the significance of the facts under his nose, and pegged away. Perhaps he pegged away the harder, and continued to peg away the longer, because he had no wife to distract his attention from the shop. At all events, he died a wealthy octogenarian bachelor, and after distributing about £17,000 among his relatives, directed that the balance of his fortune should be devoted to the endowment of the school which bears his name.

Abraham Hayward, who was neither the most eminent nor the least eminent of the Blundellians, once spoke of Blundell's School as "The Eton of the West." Certainly no other West-Country school can dispute the title with it. The Plympton Grammar-school, of which we have just spoken, may, for one brief moment of its history, have turned out scholars of more world-wide renown; but the list of Blundellian celebrities is considerably longer, and extends over a greater period of time. It is the only school in the county which ever educated a king—albeit he was only a King of the Gipsies; and we find on its books such names as those of Abraham Hayward aforesaid, the eminent *Quarterly* reviewer; John Eveleigh, the Provost of Oriel, who, together with the Master of Balliol and the Dean of Christ Church, originated the honours examinations at Oxford; Parson Jack

Russell, Francis Fulford, first Metropolitan of Canada, General Chesney, author of *The Battle of Dorking*, Sir Charles Trevelyan, who drafted, with Sir Stafford Northcote, the scheme for the reorganization of the Civil Service, Archbishop Temple, and Richard Doddridge Blackmore.

It is so long a list that one hardly knows where to begin; but as we have met, or shall meet, a good many of the Blundellians elsewhere in the county, we will dwell here upon Bampfylde Moore Carew. The bad boy who runs away from school and has adventures is, in a sense, more interesting than the good boy who takes all the prizes and dies in the odour of sanctity and the spiritual and material splendour of an Archbishop; and Carew and Temple, of whom we have already spoken, may be said to represent the two extremes of the Blundellian output.

No West Countryman needs to be told that Carew is a great West-Country name. There was Sir Peter Carew; there is General Pole-Carew; there are, and have been, many others. Bampfylde Moore Carew could boast of being one of *the* Carews. Life was made easy for him by the accident of birth. He ought to have grown up to be a Squire, a Justice of the Peace, a Master of Foxhounds, an Officer in the Yeomanry, a Chairman of Quarter Sessions, and everything else that is reckoned respectable, and

even a little better than respectable. Instead of which . . . His home was at Bickleigh, and he was sent to Blundell's as a matter of course; Blundell's being already the Eton of the West, and the real Eton being too remote for the education of Devonshire boys in the days when there were few stage-coaches and the roads ran through quagmires. The time was the reign of Anne; and the head master was William Rayner, of Christ Church, Oxford, lately promoted from the head mastership of the Grammar-school at Barnstaple, where John Gay, the poet, whom we shall meet, had been one of his pupils. It is a curious coincidence which assigns the same teacher to the King of Beggars and the author of *The Beggar's Opera*.

Bampfylde is said to have been a promising scholar, and at least moderately industrious. But he was also a precocious sportsman in an age in which the only people who did not live for sport were those who could not afford to do so. There was no cricket in those days, and, probably, no football; so the aristocrats among the Blundell boys kept a pack of hounds, with the connivance, if not the open approval, of their parents and masters; and it was the pack of hounds that got Bampfylde into trouble. He pursued a tame deer, recognizable as private property by the collar round its neck; and he pursued it for several hours through fields of

standing corn, to the furious indignation of the farmers.

There were complaints. Farmer after farmer called upon the head master, demanding compensation in cash for the damage done to his crops. Mr. Rayner instituted enquiries, discovered the ringleaders, and gave them an appointment in his study, where he kept the implements of punishment. In order to avoid that appointment, Bampfylde Moore Carew ran away. He came to a public-house a short distance from Tiverton, where he found a company of gipsies carousing. They had plenty to eat and to drink, and they danced country dances with hearts as light as their feet. An ideal way of living, it seemed to Bampfylde Moore Carew—much better than doing sums and learning Latin declensions and keeping appointments with the birch. He asked to be allowed to join the gipsies, and they agreed, and made him swear an oath that he would live in obedience to their laws.

Their laws, it seems, were pretty much those of the Franciscan Friars. The idea was that they should be individually poor, but corporately as rich as possible. They begged their bread, and threw the proceeds of their mendicancy into the common stock; and they yielded implicit obedience to the King whom they elected, and whose principal privilege was to have his begging done for him by his subjects.



They differed from the Friars, however, in one more important particular: that they disguised themselves in order to beg, and levied their contributions from the benevolent by means of false pretences, and also by the practice, or affected practice, of certain occult arts.

Fortune-telling was, of course, the most common of those arts; but there were others, and Bampfylde Moore Carew quickly gave a proof of his quality by figuring in the character of a diviner. He was sent to attend Mrs. Musgrove, of Munkton, near Taunton, who wished to consult a gipsy in "an affair of difficulty." She suspected, she told him, that a large sum of money was buried somewhere on the premises, and—would the diviner be so good as to tell her where to look for it? She would pay twenty guineas for the information. The diviner replied that the treasure was under such-and-such a tree, but that it would be idle to dig for it until such-and-such an hour, when the conjunction of the planets would be favourable. His own fee, however, he added, was, like a physician's, payable at the time—and he duly received it and departed with it.

The boy who could play a trick of that sort at the age of sixteen had an undeniable turn for humorous rascality; and Bampfylde Moore Carew seems to have felt that he had found his vocation. His parents, indeed, sought him out, and persuaded him to return, and even killed

a fatted calf for him, inviting the whole parish to the feast, and causing peals of joy to be rung on the bells of the parish church; but all in vain. Their son had tasted freedom. His sympathies were with those who poached game rather than with those who preserved it; with vagabonds rather than with Chairmen of Quarter Sessions. The "call of the wild" was always ringing in his ears. It rang louder than the call of filial piety. He heard it, and obeyed, and went back to his gipsy friends; and they also killed a fatted calf for him, or, it may be, a trapped hare or a stolen duck; and his life thenceforward was that of a vagabond who never repented or regretted his choice of a career.

He became a legendary figure among vagabonds—such a one as Robin Hood among outlaws, Dick Turpin among highwaymen, and Jack Sheppard among housebreakers. His Life was written, and passed through more editions than the Lives of many worthier characters. When Claude Patch, King of the Gipsies, died, he was elected to the vacant throne; but he was far too strenuous a sovereign to live in idleness at the charge of inferior mendicants. Setting an example instead of issuing orders, he continued to follow his dishonest trade with the zest of a neophyte, and so made himself the most popular king the gipsies ever had.

It may be that not all the stories told of him are true. His personality was such as to attract

stories of a certain sort, much as the magnet attracts iron filings. The picture, however, is consistent, and convincing. Bampfylde stands out in it as a genial rogue, admired and liked even by those whom he fooled, and endowed with gifts which nowadays would make the fortune of a "quick-change artiste." He could "make-up" to the life, deceiving the very elect, as a ship-wrecked sailor, a cripple, a Quaker, a tradesman who had lost his little all in a fire, or a clergyman who had been turned out of his benefice on account of his political opinions. In each of these characters in turn—and in many other characters as well—he imposed upon the charitable; and when, as sometimes happened, he was found out, he laughed in the faces of his benefactors, and persuaded them to enter into the spirit of the jest, and keep him to supper in order that he might show them "how it was done."

He married a wife—the daughter of an apothecary at Newcastle-on-Tyne—to whom he had represented himself as the mate of a trading vessel. It is said that he was true to her, and that she never regretted her choice of a husband. At one stage of his career he set himself to learn a trade, feeling, as his sympathetic biographer puts it, "that we are not born for ourselves only, but are indebted to all mankind, to be of as great use and service to them as our capacities and abilities will enable us to be." To that

end—making a modest estimate of his capacities—he became a rat-catcher, paying a liberal fee to an expert to teach him the art. But he seldom practised it, finding it more profitable to disguise himself, pitch a pitiful tale, and ask for alms. He once went so far as to impersonate—and with complete success—a young woman of whom a squire, addicted to gallantry, had “taken advantage.” A cat carried in a basket is said to have sustained the *rôle* of the alleged young woman’s alleged baby.

Of course, he was sometimes caught; but that, as has been said, seldom mattered. He never used, or threatened, violence, like the highwaymen; he did not break into houses. It was generally agreed that his victims were fairly “scored off,” and that it behoved them, as good sportsmen, to show themselves “good losers,” and bear no malice. Some of those who gave him alms, indeed, were as proud as the lady whom Claude Duval had compelled to dance a minuet with him on Hounslow Heath; and his welcome in a country house was usually as kind as that of a tumbler, a sword-swallower, or a company of strolling players. In the list of those who received him with open arms one finds any number of respected West-Country names—those, for instance, of the Bassetts, of Watermouth, and the Courtenays, of Powderham.

He was caught, however, twice too often. On





BAMPFYLDE MOORE CAREW.

each occasion he was transported to Maryland; but on each occasion he escaped and got back to England, after begging his way through the American colonies, his necessities being relieved, on one of his journeys, it is said, by the famous Methodist preacher, Whitefield. On his second return he had a narrow escape of being impressed for the Navy, but contrived to be rejected on the ground that he was sickening for smallpox,—which malady he declared himself to have caught by dreaming that his wife was laid up with it. When England was too hot to hold him, he spent some time in France, where he begged from the Catholics in the character of a persecuted Protestant, and from the Protestants in the character of a persecuted Catholic.

And so on, and so forth. There is no climax in Bampfylde Moore Carew's career, and no turning-point. As he had begun, so he continued until, at an advanced age, he drew a substantial prize in a lottery, and bought a little land in his native country, and settled down with his wife and daughter to the same sort of existence as the just men who needed no repentance. Suppose we stop to moralize, and to break lance with Mr. Baring-Gould.

"The fellow," Mr. Baring-Gould has written, "was a worthless rogue, without a redeeming quality in him": a severe sentiment of the sort that makes respectable people feel more re-

spectable, and comfortable people more comfortable than ever, and so give widespread satisfaction. One can imagine Mr. Gould feeling that he has done the State some service by uttering it, even if it is not strictly true. But it is a shallow sentiment, none the less. It not merely overlooks Bampfylde Moore Carew's brief attempt to redeem the time as a rat-catcher. It also misses the essence and inwardness of what one may call—coining a word for the purpose—Bampfylde-Moore-Carewness; and it is altogether too much in the tone of the country magistrate's hackneyed homily: "Prisoner, your parents have given you a good education, instead of which you go about stealing ducks."

Bampfylde Moore Carew did not go about stealing ducks to any extent worth speaking of; indeed there is no positive evidence that he ever stole any ducks at all. Nor does any act of violence stand to his discredit, nor any crime other than those which rhetoricians describe as "man-made." His life, rightly regarded, was a life of criticism and protest—even as Tolstoy's was, albeit in a different way. He offered an ironical practical criticism of the lives of the country squires of his time by "going one better" than they did. Perhaps that remark needs explanation, but it nevertheless means something.

The squires of the time were social parasites,



with a swollen sense of their own importance. They drew rent instead of working for their living; and they lived for themselves alone—hunting the fox in the morning, and drinking till they rolled under the table at night. It seemed to them that this was the divinely ordered scheme of things, and that they who lived idly at the charge of others were the pillars of Church and State—men of superior clay to those who tilled the soil. It never occurred to them to question these assumptions, and anyone who did question them in open argument seemed to them a godless and ill-conditioned person who ought to be locked up.

To them there entered Bampfylde Moore Carew—a man of their own order who mocked at them and fooled them—a parasite preying upon parasites, getting something from them for nothing (just as they got a great deal for nothing from their poorer neighbours), and then laughing in their faces. His method, in short, was the *reductio ad absurdum* of their method—his life a parody of their lives. They appear to have realized the fact, being sensitive to ridicule, although impervious to argument, and having, after all, a crude elementary sense of justice lurking at the backs of their brains. Consequently they could not bring themselves to be hard on him, after the fashion of Societies for the Suppression of Mendicants, but regarded the contributions which he levied more or less

in the light of losses at cards—debts of honour to be paid without haggling.

One does not, of course, commend his career as a model for imitation, and one feels sure that it was not for the benefit of such pupils that Peter Blundell—that estimable man who bought so much merchandise in the cheapest market in order to sell it in the dearest—founded his excellent school. But it was a career which, none the less, had its utility. From Bampfylde Moore Carew's own point of view, perhaps, it was only the crude attempt of an artist in life at self-expression; but it also helped to make the eighteenth century picturesque, and compelled a good many eighteenth-century squires to reconsider their prejudices. All conventional people need to be shaken up in some such way from time to time. Mr. Baring-Gould himself would appear to have needed such stimulation when he wrote the comfortable sentence quoted.

## XII

### TAVISTOCK

A Tavistock crime—The house of Russell—William, Lord Russell—His uncompromising opposition to Popery—William Browne and his *Pastorals*—*The Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family*

THE writer's chief recollection of Tavistock is connected with a village tragedy: a story of a youth, disappointed in love, who sprang, armed, from behind a hedge, one summer's evening, and shot his sweetheart on her way home from church. It was an old story; but something had happened which revived the interest in it. A London editor wanted to get at the facts; a pilgrimage of enquiry was undertaken.

No matter about the details,—they lie, and shall remain, on the dust-heap of forgotten things; but one memory of the investigation lingers. It is a memory of an aged crone—at either Peter Tavy or Mary Tavy—who sat, voluble, in a village inn, and took the murderer's part. She had known the murderer's victim and remarked her levity, caprices, and

coquettish ways. Fickleness, it seemed to her, was the unpardonable sin against the Unwritten Law—sure to be punished and fully meriting whatever punishment befell. Shaking her head, and wagging her finger, she warmed to her subject, and waxed eloquent:

“ ‘Er led un on, ‘er did. ‘Er let un take ‘er to Agricultural Show, and then ‘er walked out with another chap. Sarve ‘er right if ‘e did shoot ‘er, I say. Sarve ‘er right.”

So chivalrous can woman be to man—and so merciless to her own sex—when, the time of her own triumphs and tyrannies being overpast, she sees the terrible, but fleeting, power of beauty and bright eyes abused!

But let that pass. The village tragedy was not the only thing which held the pilgrim’s interest. He also noticed how the horizon seemed to be bounded on every side by the large-looming figure of the Duke of Bedford. Of course the hotel was called after him: The Bedford Arms,—arms in which the pilgrim was very comfortably clasped. One had a pleasant feeling that here (or hereabouts) was a Duke who was really *Dux*—or “leader”; paternally anxious that all those who drank his health should drink it, not indeed at his expense, as one might perhaps have hoped to do in feudal times, but, at least, in liquor of which he guaranteed the quality, served in pots which were ample because he wished it so.

One knew, of course, that his property in the neighbourhood was really stolen property—though not stolen recently: that the actual reason why he was able to give one this impression of owning the earth was that a certain ancestor of his—the Lord John Russell of his time—had been a fortunate receiver of stolen goods—one of the Pauls for whose benefit the Church of St. Peter was robbed by Henry VIII. For that Reformation of which we are so proud—those of us, that is to say, who are proud of it—was, largely, on its financial side, a Disendowment of the Church for the benefit of the landed gentry, and the personal friends of the King: a convenient fact to remember, as Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Hugh Cecil know, when the Dukes of our own day denounce the proposed Disendowment of the Church for the benefit of the community in general as an awful act of sacrilege. If sauce for the goose be also sauce for the gander . . . but no matter. Enough that the site of Tavistock Abbey, and certain manors appertaining thereto, were taken away from certain monks and bestowed upon Lord John Russell, first Earl of Bedford, whose descendants are no less highly esteemed in Tavistock than they would be if their forefathers had come by their possessions honestly.

And, of course, some of their ill-gotten gains have, in one way and another, been passed on

to the local community. The community owes to them, among other things, a guildhall, a school building, and, above all, a swimming-bath. Pilgrims who have plunged into that swimming-bath on a hot summer's day may be disposed to take lenient views of the sacrilege which put the House of Russell in a position to pay for it, doubting whether it would ever have occurred to the monks to gratify their neighbours with that particular benefit. For though monks, in the Middle Age, taught the world much, they did not teach it to wash; and it was, indeed, once the boast of a monastic community—that of the Grande Chartreuse—that a special dispensation of Providence preserved them from the unpleasant consequences of unclean habits. But that is a digression.

Returning to the Russells, we find that, when Tavistock was their pocket-borough, they gave it more than one member to be proud of, notably William, Lord Russell, and John Pym; and these may be said, in a sense, to have earned the stolen lands granted at the dissolution of the monasteries by standing up for the Protestant religion when it was in danger. Pym first came into prominence by insisting that the penalties which the law imposed upon Catholics should be enforced by Charles I; while William, Lord Russell, gave Charles II an additional reason for adhering to the opinion which he

had formed in his youth that Tavistock was a very objectionable place.

His Majesty's original prejudice against the borough was based upon the climate. He was there, for a short while, during the Civil War; and it rained all day for several days in succession,—a fact which he remembered for the remainder of his life. Whenever, thereafter, anyone remarked to him that it was a fine day, his invariable answer was: "Yes, yes, a very fine day, indeed; but no doubt it is raining at Tavistock": a pleasant jest, though one supposes that it would break down under close statistical enquiry. But jest became grim earnest when the moist borough sent William Russell to the House of Commons, and William Russell acquired the habit of rising in his place and saying blunt things about "Popery" and the King's suspected sympathies therewith:

"Sir, I am of opinion that the life of our King, the safety of our country and Protestant religion, are in great danger from Popery, and that either this Parliament must suppress the power and growth of Popery, or else that Popery will soon destroy, not only Parliament, but all that is near and dear to us. And therefore I humbly move that we may resolve to take into consideration, in the first place how to suppress Popery, and to prevent a Popish successor;

without which all our endeavours about other matters will not signify anything, and therefore this justly challenges the precedence."

Such was the utterance of the Member for Tavistock, who would doubtless have adopted Victor Hugo's denunciation of the Bishop of Rome as "*vieillard sinistre*." He said the same thing again and again, in other words, at other times, being in deadly earnest, even if those ancestors of his who took over the church lands were not; and, in the end, as all the world knows, he paid for his opinions with his life. The King, instead of arguing with him, accused him of plotting, and had his head cut off. He protested, to the last, that he was innocent of any design against the King's life, but that he regarded Popery as "an idolatrous and bloody religion," as, indeed, history shows that it can sometimes be; and then he prepared to die. His wife came to bid him farewell in his prison; and when the parting was over, he said, "Now the bitterness of death is past": memorable words which may do more to keep his memory green than any of his philippics against Roman Catholicism.

Those, after all, are mechanical, and out of date, and based upon a misapprehension. They attack the Church of Rome on religious grounds, whereas it is really on the political side that it is assailable. Between the actual creeds of



Catholicism and Protestantism there is not a vast deal of difference; and where men profess to walk by faith and not by sight it is only natural that they should be found walking in a great variety of directions with equal earnestness and energy. The very word "belief" implies uncertainty, and no man possesses exclusive information regarding the unseen. The thing to look at, therefore, when balancing religions against each other, is not doctrine, but organization; and the religion which most naturally arouses suspicion is the elaborately organized religion: a religion which, by reason of its hierarchical constitution, most definitely gives one the impression of having been called into being, and of being kept up, for the benefit of the hierarchy.

In the case of the Church of Rome, one cannot easily get away from that impression. It too often discovers that it has interests which are by no means identical with the interests of the community. In its quest of religious absolutism it is too ready to enter into an unholy alliance with political absolutism, whereby freedom of thought and freedom of action are simultaneously fettered. Hence the outcry against it (in spite of the beauty of the holiness of some of its saints) among the intelligent classes in all countries in which it amounts to more than a minor sect. The faith, as intelligent people perceive, is of much less account

than the system; which system is very reprehensible, divorcing power from responsibility, and placing it in the hands of unscrupulous persons who still show their unfitness to be trusted with power by continuing a policy of persecution wherever (as in Spain) the state of civilization is sufficiently backward to permit them.

That (though William, Lord Russell, only dimly perceived as much) is the real *gravamen* of the case against the Church of Rome. A denunciation of its essential doctrines as "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits" is an unprofitable outcry: a form of words hurtling against another form of words, and neither form of words precisely corresponding to any tangible or thinkable things; but a plain statement as to the practical working of the system in, let us say, the Ferrer case, is fraught with disgraceful meaning and amply justifies the anti-clerical position.

But that is another digression—too long, it may be, for some tastes. The time has come to speak of the literary associations of Tavistock, which begin with the name of William Browne, and end, for the present, with that of Mr. Baring-Gould.

Of William Browne one really ought to speak at length; but it is difficult to do so for lack of information. One hardly knows anything about him for certain except that he was born at Tavistock in 1591, attended the Tavistock Grammar-school, resided, but did not graduate, at Exeter College, Oxford, wrote *Britannia's Pastorals*, and died in the course of the Civil War, without having taken any part in it; but one may add that his birth was gentle, and his poetry gentlemanly, and that, somehow or other, he managed to make poetry, culture, and gentlemanliness pay. He was the private tutor, at Oxford, of the future Earl of Carnarvon, and his *magnum opus* was dedicated to William Herbert, first Earl of Pembroke, from whom his friend, John Morgan, of the Inner Temple, who contributed some complimentary lines to the volume, evidently expected him to receive a tangible reward as well as an expression of thanks. "And may?" he wrote:

"And may thy early strains affect the ear  
Of that rare Lord, who judge and guerdon can  
The richer gifts which do advantage man!"

Which aspiration was fulfilled, somehow or other. The poet lived for some time, one knows not in what capacity, in the family of the Herberts, at Wilton, and, according to Anthony-a-Wood, "got wealth and purchased an estate."

He also married money—twice—and settled near Dorking; but it was chiefly the scenery of his birthplace which inspired him as a pastoral poet. He thus invokes it:

“ Show me who can so many crystal rills,  
Such sweet-cloth’d valleys or aspiring hills;  
Such wood-ground, pastures, quarries, wealthy mines;  
Such rocks in whom the diamond fairly shines.”

And therefore:

“ My Muse for lofty pitches shall not roam,  
But homely pipen of my native home.”

One would quote more if one had much hope of being thanked for doing so; but the necessity is not urgent. The lines given prove all that one cares to prove: to wit, that William Browne was entitled to say, as Alfred de Musset said, “ *Mon verre est petit, mais je bois dans mon verre.*” His note, that is, though not a loud one, was his own. If his verse does not rise much above the level of descriptive reporting, it is, at least, the reporting of a sympathetic reporter, who lingers lovingly over his task and puts himself into it when he can. The beauties of nature, at any rate, interested William Browne more than the furies of civil strife: so that, though both his pupil and his patron fell fighting for the King on Newbury Down, he stayed at home, like Vaughan the Silurist, without taking a side, finding his pleasure, without

reference to King or Parliament, in cool woods, green fields, and rippling streams. Peace to his memory, since peace was what he loved; and then a word about the other literary notabilities of the town.

The first was Mrs. Bray who, being married to the Vicar, first soaked up all the legendary lore of the neighbourhood like a sponge, and then, as it were, squeezed out the sponge over three volumes of delightful gossip. The next is Mrs. Rundle Charles, the author of *Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family*: a book which everybody used to read, though nobody reads it any longer. Why it was so widely popular—why it ceased to be so widely popular—these things are mysteries. One never associated it with its author as one associated *Hamlet* with Shakespeare or *Pickwick* with Dickens; one never knew, unless one were fresh from a catalogue, what else its author had written. It entered our houses on its merits (whatever these may have been) like *Cavendish*, and *Mrs. Beeton*, and *Enquire Within*. Perhaps some microbe, not yet identified, spread the contagion, for one never knows what microbes will next be up to; and if so, the Men of Tavistock will be proud to think that such a microbe originated in their midst.

Just as they are proud of the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, who, at the moment of writing, flourishes about four miles away from them: a man of

letters equally versatile and voluminous ; a quick writer who will turn you out a book on any subject, secular or sacred, at the shortest notice, and has especially endeared himself to Devonians by collecting their songs, and seeking out and setting in order their good stories.





*Photo]*

*[Blackburn,*

BIRTHPLACE OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH.



## XIII

### THE ESTUARY OF THE EXE:

#### LEFT BANK

Sir Walter Raleigh

DESCENDING the Exe by the left bank, we find our way to Sir Walter Raleigh's country, whence the distance to the Coleridge country is not great; and there is no site which need delay us until we reach Sir Walter's birthplace—Hayes Barton, in the parish of East Budleigh. "For the natural disposition I have to the place, being born in that house, I had rather seat myself there than anywhere else," he wrote in 1584 to the owner, from whom he proposed—unsuccessfully—to buy it. The date of his birth is believed, though it is not certainly known, to have been 1552, so that he grew up just in time to play a mature man's leading part in that long struggle with Spain of which the defeat of the Armada was the climax.

It need not be claimed that he was the greatest of the great men of that great age; but he was assuredly its most picturesque—and perhaps also its most pathetic—figure. One

dares not attempt to summarize his life in the short space available, for in bald biographical summaries picturesqueness disappears. His case is rather one for history "read by flashes of lightning," or perhaps by limelight. Of all the great Devonians, and of all the great Elizabethans, he is assuredly the most theatrical: a *jeune premier*, as it were, as careful in dressing his part as in playing it, with a genius for the gesture which arrests attention and lingers in the memory long after the curtain has been rung down. Drake, it may well be, did more than he for England; but what Sir Walter did, whether for his country, or for his Queen, or for himself, he did with the dashing and romantic air which always makes a sure appeal to our imagination. One notes that in the last act of the drama no less than in the first. The life is a series of *tableaux*; the picture never disappoints; nor can the world ever bring itself to doubt the truth of the picture even when the evidence for its best details is of questionable value.

All the world knows and believes old Fuller's story of his first presentation to Elizabeth:

"Her Majesty meeting with a plashy place, made some scruple to go on, when Raleigh presently cast off and spread his new plush cloak on the ground, whereon the Queen trod

gently over, rewarding him afterwards with many suits for his so free and seasonable tender of so fair a footcloth."

All the world, again, knows and believes that other story of Raleigh's message, cut on the glass with his diamond ring:

"Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall."

And Elizabeth's encouraging reply thereto:

"If thy heart fail thee, do not climb at all."

One could strip the latter story of some of its romance, of course, by pointing out that Elizabeth was twenty years Raleigh's senior, and fifty years of age at the date of the incident; but that would be against the rules. Queens, like actresses, have the right to decide for themselves how long they will remain young; and it is the first duty of a courtier to uphold that royal prerogative. Even the great Bacon, speaking of Elizabeth's weaknesses, gravely laid it down that "gratification of this sort did not much hurt her reputation, and not at all her majesty."

Moreover, Raleigh's gallantries, and his desire to use gallantry as the stepping-stone to preferment, did not impede sentiment when the hour sounded for it. He knew, as well as other people, that "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned"; but he braved the *spretæ injuria formæ* when his heart was really touched by

another Bess—the Queen's maid-of-honour, Bess Throckmorton. He did not ask the Queen's leave to marry Bess Throckmorton, for the Queen might very possibly have refused it. He simply married her and took the consequences, though the consequences involved a fall from favour and a period of detention, on other pretexts, in the Tower; and he never regretted what he had done. "I chose you and I loved you in my happiest times," he wrote to his wife in later years, after graver troubles had overtaken both of them; and, of course, the romance has a truer ring when we find Raleigh jilting his sovereign for a maid of his own station than when we see him courting her.

In the end, however, the Queen forgave him, her vanity having been more deeply compromised than her heart, and other courtiers being ready, if not anxious, to gratify her love of admiration; and so Raleigh picked up the cue for his re-entry, and swaggered on to the stage of history with the same jaunty air as before. We see him dashing off to Guiana in quest of El Dorado, and then harrying the Spaniard in the famous raid on Cadiz. As Drake had singed the King of Spain's beard before the Armada, so Raleigh singed it afterwards; and once again, though others shared the glory, it was Raleigh who acquitted himself of the *beau geste* which merits the limelight.

The bulk of the Spanish flotilla had been

withdrawn into the inner basin of the harbour, and Raleigh, in order to get at the galleons, had to run the gauntlet of the forts and galleys. They brought their guns to bear on him; but he dashed by, disdaining to return their fire in his haste to engage the bigger prizes:

“To show scorn to all which,” is his own way of putting it, “I only answered first the fort and afterwards the galleys, to each piece a blur with my trumpet; disdaining to shoot one piece or any at all of those esteemed dreadful monsters.”

A piece of bravado characteristic of the man, and likely to be remembered longer than any of the tangible profits of the expedition, though these included the plundering of a library for the benefit of the Bodleian. It was the brightest day, according to his biographers, in Raleigh's life, and there truly were to be no brighter days for him thereafter. Disgrace and imprisonment loomed not many years ahead, and it is to be noted that, even at the hours of those cruel and ignominious experiences, he still comported himself as one who was not only careful of his dignity, but knew his worth. Even in the Tower, in which he was to pass some twelve years of his life, he does not, like most prisoners, disappear from view, but still has a stage and an audience, and still cuts a figure.

The charge, of course, was treason: treason which he indignantly denied, and of which there is no reason to suppose him to have been guilty; treason attributed to him chiefly because his enemies were in the ascendant in the royal councils, and James I did not like him. "Of my soul I have heard rawly of thee," is said to have been the King's greeting at their first interview; and every Devonian will feel that a monarch capable of that fatuous and offensive pun would have been justly treated if he had been stowed away under the throne instead of being seated on it. There could be no question of that, however, and the upshot of the matter was that Raleigh was tried, and convicted, and sentenced to death, and then reprieved "during the King's pleasure"; which pleasure lasted until the King was persuaded to release him from prison to look for a gold mine, and then to put him to death because—among other reasons—he had failed to find it.

We shall come to that in good time, however. We now have to remark that, though a prisoner, he was a personage, and continued in the public eye—not figuratively only, but literally. The picture is vividly indicated in the eloquent *Life* by Sir Rennell Rodd:

"At the hour at which it was his habit to take his daily exercise, crowds would gather round the Tower garden to watch the solitary

figure pacing up and down, with a curious interest which time softened to an indignant sympathy. Fathers would bring their little sons to see the man who had sailed beyond the sunset, and had borne the brunt of the great duel with Spain, now almost the last of a little band of heroes whose names were fast passing into the mythic cycle. It was not strange that young Prince Henry, as he too came to look at the gallant figure in the courtly dress, which even in prison Raleigh still affected, should sigh with a boy's generous resentment to think that his father should 'keep such a splendid bird in a cage.' "

Prince Henry was, of course, the Prince of Wales, whose early death from a fever made room for Charles I. He is said to have extorted from his father a promise, which he did not live to see fulfilled, of Raleigh's ultimate release. When he lay on his death-bed, Raleigh sent him, at the Queen's request, a cordial of his own distilling which, it was hoped, might save him after the physician's medicines had failed. The Queen had herself taken it in an illness, and believed that it had preserved her life; and it maintained, for nearly a century, a reputation akin to that acquired in our own time by the medicaments of the Grande Chartreuse, though Prince Henry was beyond its help.

A prisoner to whom such an appeal could be made was clearly in no ordinary captivity; and a further picture, not less picturesque than the other, of the amenities of his detention, may be taken from Mr. Edmund Gosse's summary of one of Raleigh's letters:

"Raleigh is busy working in the garden, and, the pale being down, the charming young Lady Effingham—his old friend Nottingham's daughter—strolls by along the terrace on the arm of the Countess of Beaumont. The ladies lean over the paling and watch the picturesque old magician poring over his crucibles, his face lighted up with the flames from his furnace. They fall a-chatting with him, and Lady Effingham coaxes him to spare her a little of that famous balsam which he brought back from Guiana. He tells her that he has none prepared, but that he will send her some by their common friend, Captain Whitlock, and presently he does so."

So the days, and the weeks, and the months, and the years passed; but Raleigh found his chief solace in literature. He was allowed to see his friends and to have books about him; and so he laboured away at that *History of the World* which still has its place in literature, though it is not included among the books which people read. It is too long, and the scholarship is inexact, but the sentences have



the sweep and swing which spacious times had brought into our English prose. The man of action who could sit down to such a task when well advanced in middle-age must, indeed, have had resources in himself beyond those of most adventurers. One might have expected the trait to appeal to a King who was himself an author, albeit an author whose chief work was *A Counterblast against Tobacco*—that comforting herb brought home by Raleigh from Virginia, which has done more for the happiness of humankind than all the gold in all the mines of all the Indies.

There is no reason, however, for thinking that it did. The greed for gold was stronger in James than his love of literary art. He let Raleigh out because he knew of a gold mine in Guiana; and he sent him on the absurd quest which was foredoomed to fail. Raleigh could not possibly get the gold without fighting the Spaniards for it, since they were in occupation of the territory in which it was to be found; and yet the Spanish Ambassador was promised that, if violence were done to Spanish subjects, the plunder should be restored to them, and the author of the outrage hanged,—which is to say that James was at once a criminal, a blunderer, and a double dealer. One has a certain savage satisfaction in saying that of the King who found Raleigh, as a man of letters, “too saucy in censuring the acts of princes.”

So Raleigh went to his doom: a sexagenarian prospector for gold, condemned to prospect with a halter round his neck. Most likely he assumed that his hampering instructions were only meant to save his royal master's face. He had survived from an age in which the harrying of the Spaniard was of the essence of British patriotism, and a state of war in the Indies was deemed compatible with a state of peace in Europe. The mere fact of his despatch on such an errand implied a tendency to revert to that doctrine on the part of the King's counsellors. He was not to foresee that his best friends would die, and the supporters of Spain come to predominate at the English Court, during his absence.

That, however, was what happened. Perhaps, if Raleigh had succeeded, his success might have compelled yet another revulsion of feeling, and exultant public opinion would have spoken too loudly to be ignored. But everything was against him, and he failed. His crews, he says, "some forty gentlemen excepted, were the very scum of the world—drunkards, blasphemers, and such others as their fathers, brothers, and friends thought it an exceeding good gain to be discharged of." He himself, after his twelve years in the Tower, was no longer the man that he had been. He fell sick of a fever—that is to say, of malaria—and mutinous subordinates took the business out of his hands and bungled it.

No gold was got, and, in the fighting, the Spaniards gained the advantage. Raleigh returned, and James took the mean revenge which damned his memory for ever.

The demand that the buccaneer should be surrendered to Spain could not, indeed, be granted. The suggestion that it might be complied with brought an angry mob to do rough justice on the windows of the Spanish Embassy: a proceeding for which the King apologized, ordering the Lord Mayor to do likewise. It might, in the circumstances, have been dangerous to put Raleigh on his trial, but there remained the old charge of treason for which, in spite of his release, he had received no formal pardon. The old sentence on that charge, so long held in suspense, could now be put in execution; and that was the cowardly course taken. Raleigh was brought before the judges, and it was signified to him that he must prepare for death.

So we come to the final scene; and Raleigh's was the noblest and most striking figure that had a part in it. The eyes of England were upon him, while he, on his part, looked into the eyes of death and did not flinch. To the Dean of Westminster, who came to pray with him, his confident courage seemed almost scandalous, though, in the end, the courage impressed the Dean even more than the scandal:

"When I began," the Dean reports, "to encourage him against the fear of death, he seemed to make so light of it that I wondered at him. When I told him that the dear servants of God, in better causes than his, had shrunk back and trembled a little, he denied it not. But yet he gave God thanks that he had never feared death. . . . He was the most fearless of death that was ever known, and the most resolute and confident, yet with reverence and conscience."

He was so composed, too, that he could put his last thoughts in verse. The lines are still remembered:

"Even such is time, that takes in trust  
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,  
And pays us but with earth and dust;  
Who in the dark and silent grave,  
When we have wandered all our ways,  
Shuts up the story of our days;  
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,  
My God shall raise me up, I trust.

So that his courage stood in no need of the stimulus of the fighter's passion. Death was for him only an incident in life—a great occasion truly, but not the end of all. He dressed for it as for a great occasion—not without an eye to effect, wearing a black embroidered velvet night-gown over a hare-coloured satin doublet, and a black embroidered waistcoat, together with a ruff-band, black taffeta breeches,

and ash-coloured silk stockings. He lighted his last pipe, and looked beyond through its curling pillar of cloud. He emptied his last cup of sack, saying playfully that it was "a good drink if a man might tarry by it." And so, with a firm step to the place of execution, where he made his last speech in the firm tones of the man who is confident that posterity will hear.

He was innocent, he strenuously affirmed, of the crime laid to his charge—might his name be blotted out of the book of life if he spoke untruly! There were other accusations also whispered, but not preferred, of which he wished to clear his memory. He defended himself, and swept on with the proud joy of one whose great glories had been gained, not in the study or the council chamber, but under the open sky, where he was blown upon by the strong salt winds which carried him beyond the sunset:

"I thank God that He has sent me to die in the light, and not in darkness. I likewise thank God that He has suffered me to die before such an assembly of honourable witnesses, and not obscurely in the Tower, where, for the space of thirteen years together, I have been oppressed with many miseries. And I return Him thanks that my fever hath not taken me at this time, as I prayed to Him that it might not, that I might clear myself of such accusations unjustly

laid to my charge, and leave behind me the testimony of a true heart both to my King and country."

And then recalling that, though no traitor, but one who had spent all that he might of his life in the faithful service of his country, he nevertheless had sinned as all mortal men must do:

"Now I entreat that you will all join me in prayer to that great God of heaven whom I have grievously offended, that He will of His almighty goodness extend to me forgiveness, being a man full of all vanity, and one who hath lived a sinful life in such callings as have been most inducing to it; for I have been a soldier, a sailor, and a courtier, all of them courses of wickedness and vice; but I trust He will not only cast away my sin, but will receive me into everlasting life."

And finally, signifying that he had finished and was ready:

"I have a long journey to take, and must bid the company farewell."

So the company withdrew, and the last preparations were made. He was asked whether he would not prefer to die with his face turned towards the East. "What matter," he asked, "which way the head lie, so the heart be

right?" And then to the headsman, seeing that he flinched from his task, in that rich West-Country accent which, even at Court, he had never lost, "What doest thou fear? Strike, man, strike!"

And then the stroke fell, and a cry went up from the crowd—the cry with which the utterance of posterity began—the cry which Devon and England still echo to the eternal dishonour of our first Stewart King, "We have not such another head to be cut off."

## XIV

### OTTERY ST. MARY

Alexander Barclay—The Coleridge country—The Rev.  
John Coleridge—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—Hartley  
Coleridge

ALEXANDER BARCLAY, the author of the *Ship of Fools*, was our principal man of letters in the barren reign of Henry VII; and he was a Prebendary of Ottery St. Mary, and found models for the fools whom he ridiculed among his Devonian neighbours, both clerical and lay. One ought, if one aimed at scientific completeness, to begin with him; but that might be a trial to patience. Those who are curious about Alexander Barclay will find what they want in biographical dictionaries. One thinks of Ottery St. Mary, not as the Alexander Barclay country, but as the Coleridge country.

Benjamin Jowett, the great Master of Balliol, is said once to have complained that the Coleridges were so numerous that only a man of vast intellect could reasonably hope to distinguish them all and remember their complicated inter-relations. One certainly meets them, as



Mr. Kipling's sailor said that he had met the marines, "all over the world, doing all sorts of things," and doing them, in a great proportion of cases, more than ordinarily well. The lawyers among them have risen to be judges, and the clergymen have risen to be bishops. Among the pedagogues of the family we find an Eton Master and a Principal of St. Mark's College, Chelsea, where the teachers in the Church of England elementary schools used to be trained. And their greatest names, of course, have been the names of poets; so that Ottery St. Mary has a great deal to be proud of.

Broadly speaking, one may, as an aid to memory, divide the multitudinous Coleridges into two great groups. There have been the Coleridges of talent whose virtues have adorned, as in some cases they still adorn, both public and private stations, in strict accordance with the rules prescribed by pious and respectable people; and there have also been the Coleridges of genius who, in spite of their genius, have, somehow or other, turned out unsatisfactorily. To the former class, of course, belong Mr. Justice Coleridge, the contemporary and friend, at Oxford, of Keble and Dr. Arnold, and the first Lord Coleridge, and the Coleridge who was Bishop of Barbados, and the Derwent Coleridge who was Macaulay's friend at Cambridge, and edited the poems of Præd and

Moultrie, and presided over that St. Mark's College above referred to, and some others to whom, as they are still living, it might seem invidious to pay more particular compliments. The latter class is chiefly—if not solely—represented by the poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and his unfortunate son, Hartley. And Ottery St. Mary was the *fons et origo* of all of them alike.

The family can be traced back to “a considerable woollen trader in Southmolton,” who, by degrees, ceased to be considerable, and fell into poverty. The woollen trader's son John left Cambridge without a degree, became a teacher at Southmolton, and then obtained the head mastership of the Ottery St. Mary Grammar-school; and the most famous of the Coleridges was his youngest son. The head master was, said his son, “an Israelite without guile” and one who “might be compared to Parson Adams.” The few stories which have been preserved about him relate to his absentmindedness. The best of them records his method of disposing of his personal effects during “a short journey on some professional business.” This is Gillman's account of the incident:

“His good wife, in her care and watchfulness, had packed a few things in a small trunk, and gave them in charge to her husband, with strong injunctions that he was to put on a

clean shirt every day. On his return home, his wife went to search for his linen, when, to her dismay, it was not in the trunk. A closer search, however, discovered that the vicar had strictly obeyed her injunctions, and had put on daily a clean shirt, but had forgotten to remove the one underneath. This might have been the pleasantest and most portable mode of carrying half a dozen shirts in winter, but not so in the dog days."

There is the story, too, that this elder Coleridge, being invited to breakfast with the Bishop, visited a barber's shop, on the way, to be made presentable, forgot to resume his wig, and turned up at the episcopal breakfast-table, with his head as bald as a boiled egg; and there is also the story of his absentminded appropriation of a maiden lady's "smart party-going muslin apron." It was in the old days when breeches were not yet suspended by braces; and the lady, who was sitting next to him, observing that his shirt was escaping from beneath the garments which should lie over it, thought it well to whisper a warning:

"The hint was immediately given: 'Mr. Coleridge, a little on the side next me': and was as instantly acknowledged by the usual reply, 'Thank you, ma'am, thank you,' and he had set to work to replace the shirt; but unfortunately, in his nervous eagerness, he seized

on the lady's apron, and appropriated the greater part of it. The appeal of 'Dear Mr. Coleridge, do stop!' only increased his embarrassment, and also his exertions to dispose, as he thought, of the shirt; till the lady, to put a stop to the titter of the visitors, and relieve her own confusion, untied the strings, and thus disengaging herself, left the room, and her friend in possession of her apron."

These tales, however, are trivial; and it is not to the elder Coleridge that our space should be devoted. The poet has a stronger claim on it, though Ottery was not the scene of any events of importance in his career. Practically the only story told of his Devonian childhood is that he once ran away from home, to escape correction for a fault, and fell asleep, in the rain, on the banks of the Otter, with the result that a search-party sallied forth with lanterns to look for him. The incident brings another name into the story, for the lost Coleridge was found by the Sir Stafford Northcote of the period. He said that he was "subject to ague for many years after"; but he preserved happy memories of the Otter in more than one of the poems of later days.

" Dear native Brook ! wild streamlet of the West !  
 How many various-fated years have past,  
 What happy, and what mournful hours, since last  
 I skimmed the smooth thin stone along thy breast,  
 Numbering its light leaps ! yet so deep imprest

Sink the sweet scenes of childhood that mine eyes  
I never shut amid the sunny ray,  
But straight with all their tints the waters rise,  
Thy crossing plank, thy marge with willows grey,  
And bedded sand that veined with various dyes  
Gleamed through thy bright transparence! On my way,  
Visions of Childhood! oft have ye beguiled  
Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs:  
Ah! that once more I were a careless child!"

Yet it may justly be said that Coleridge was always, in some respects, a careless child—a great deal too careless to achieve that Success in Life which fell to the lot of many Coleridges of less than his natural capacity. He must certainly have retained a great deal of the spirit of the child in the days when, as Coleridge of Jesus College, Cambridge, he declared himself a Pantisocrat, and joined young Southey, of Balliol College, Oxford, in a plan to found a Pantisocratic settlement on the banks of the Susquehanna, taking wives with them—the Misses Fricker—who were to “cook and perform all domestic offices.” The plan failed chiefly because the adventurers could not raise one hundred and fifty pounds between them; but partly also, one cannot help suspecting, because the Misses Fricker were more anxious to marry than to emigrate. But it certainly shows that Coleridge was still a child in ideals, even when in years he was approaching maturity.

He also showed a child's irresponsibility in his attitude towards the practical problems of

married life: a child's helplessness in turning unique gifts to practical pecuniary account. That, beyond doubt, was one of the causes of his failure to find happiness in marriage. His wife had been a milliner; and milliners, though artists in their way, do not distinguish very clearly between the ideals of art and trade. She had a cold way of judging her husband by results; and results, for her, did not mean poetry, but the pecuniary "compensation," as they say in America, of poetry. It seemed absurd to a conscientious, but uncultivated woman, whose ideals, such as they were, had blossomed in the commercial atmosphere of a Bristol shop, that a poet should be unable even to write poetry with any degree of regularity, or to merit a further continuance of the past favours of esteemed patrons by punctuality and despatch in the execution of poetical commissions. Whence bickerings, nagging, discord, and—ultimately—separation.

Sorrow at the separation cannot, of course, have been the cause of Coleridge's continued inability to make much of his life. The evidence is conclusive that he was only too glad to get rid of Mrs. Coleridge, and was much happier—and also much better off—in the house of his friends, the Gillmans. He failed because he had no grip on the architectonics of life—because he lacked the gift of exploiting his gifts—and also because being subject to tooth-

ache, he allowed himself to become a slave of the opium habit without stopping to enquire whether opium was a dangerous drug.

Yet his failure, even so, was only comparative. He still did, in spite of the opium, from time to time, achieve, produce, and even earn his living, and maintain a respected position in the world of letters and in Society. Though he had his fits of remorse, and his hours of melancholy regret, he never actually threw up the sponge. It is when we pass from him to his son Hartley that we find ourselves face to face with a man of genius who was an absolute and acknowledged failure. For Hartley did, in spite of his genius, throw up the sponge, and recognize himself as a good-for-nothing. The recognition is in the familiar lines which he wrote in an old lesson-book:

“ When I received this volume small,  
My years were barely seventeen ;  
When it was hoped I should be all  
Which once, alas ! I might have been.

“ And now my years are thirty-five,  
And every mother hopes her lamb,  
And every happy child alive,  
Will never be what now I am.”

What does it mean?

According to the common interpretation, it means that Hartley took to drink and consequently went to the bad. His biographers have

said so, and Hartley agreed with them; but one is not convinced. One suspects that they have put the cart before the horse: that Hartley did not fail in life because he took to drink, but took to drink because he had failed in life; that the addiction to drink, in his case, was not the disease but the remedy—an unavailing remedy, and yet a palliative.

And what was the disease?

Well, we have no name for it in English; but the French know it, and diagnose it in the case of those neurasthenic Russian writers whom they see revolving helplessly in the vicious circle of Slav pessimism. They call it *impuissance de vivre*, meaning thereby a constitutional inability to hold one's own in life and adapt oneself to its hard, unalterable conditions: the perpetuation in manhood of the mental state of the weak and sensitive boy, who is the unresisting victim of bullies at a rough public school.

Poor Hartley Coleridge was such a boy, and grew up to be such a man: brilliantly clever, but odd, and overconscious of his oddness, and lamentably irresolute; a fish out of water wherever he found himself; easily disconcerted by failures of no importance; shrinking from the struggle; afraid of his fellow-men. They sent him to Oxford, and he was clever enough to win an Oriel scholarship; but he was afraid of—one may almost say that he was terri-



fied by—the elder dons in the Oriel common-room:

“I was seized,” (he wrote to his brother), “with uneasy melancholy—*triste augurium*—a feeling that I was among strangers. . . . I knew, I felt, that I was subjected to a kind of espionage, and could feel no confidence in men who were watching me. The natural effect of all this on my mind was a tendency to resistance, and I was not bold enough to fight. I was induced to fly; to shun the enquiring eyes which I ought to have met firmly.”

It was to the bottle that he fled; and its contents, though they threw a veil over his discomfort, cost him his fellowship. The courage with which wine inspired him was merely the courage to present himself in the common-room unshaven—on one occasion, it is said, with a whole week’s growth of beard on his chin; and his colleagues gave him his marching orders at the end of his probationary year. That was the first penalty which the malady of *impuissance de vivre* entailed; and we find a further symptom of the disorder in the agony of apprehension in which he set out to become a schoolmaster:

“I felt” (he confessed) “a physical incapability of exerting the necessary authority, and preserving the necessary distance, among a set

of boys in whose numbers there must needs be found high spirits and untractable natures. Boys of fifteen are harder to govern than men of twenty."

Truly they are, and Hartley Coleridge found it so.

"Every hour I spent with my pupils" (he told his brother) "was passed in a state more nearly related to fear than anything else. How then could I endure to be among unruly boys from seven in the morning till eight or nine at night, to be responsible for actions which I could no more control than I could move a pyramid? Strange it may be, but I have an instinctive horror of big boys—perhaps derived from the persecution I suffered from them when I was a little one."

It sounds absurd to men of stronger nature, but it contains the key to Hartley Coleridge's psychology. Whatever field of competition he entered, he was doomed to discomfiture at the hands of men who, though his inferiors in genius, were better adapted to their work. It was the same with him in love as in practical money-making occupations. He felt himself too odd, too shy, too unattractive and insignificant to have the prospect of winning any woman's love. It was almost as if he were a brilliant being from another planet who had

strayed into this world by mistake, and was bound to go under because the rules were too stringent for him.

Hence his need for the veil which drink threw over his disappointment and distress. It certainly did not give him strength for the battle—it never does that for any man—but it is doubtful whether he could have derived that strength from any source, and the narcotic must at least have eased his pain, and helped him - - to bear the burden of his too conspicuous incompetence and too galling sense of his own unworthiness. That is the explanation of his case, and the excuse for it, though he was too nerveless and too much under the influence of conventional opinion to invoke it.

And that is how we come to find him—far away from Ottery and from Devon—resigning himself to his subsidiary, drugged existence, in a humble lodging close to Wordsworth's house at Rydal Mount, and finding his best friends among the Westmorland dalesmen who felt more at their ease with him than with Wordsworth and Southey, knowing themselves what it was to be "overtaken," and finding in his habits that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. They loved him, and it is impossible to read his life and his poetry without feeling that he was lovable: one of the best men, one would say, who ever took to drink, and the one in whom it induced fewest

of the vices commonly supposed to follow in its train.

Apart from his excess in this particular indulgence, one hardly finds a fault attributed to him by the most censorious of his most moral and religious critics. One does not hear from any of them that he was offensive or tumultuous in his cups, or that he sought to make havoc of the virtue of the dalesmen's daughters, or even that he squandered his substance and called upon his friends and relatives to clear up the mess. One does hear, on the contrary, that he conformed, more or less automatically no doubt, to the prescriptions and ritual of the piety of his time—that he read the Bible, attended divine service, and received the sacraments of the Church; while the few letters of his which have been printed are the letters, not of a corrupt man, but of a man of sweet and simple nature—no *fanfaron* of vice like Byron, but one profoundly conscious of his inadequacy and bitterly ashamed of it, and always capable of penitence, if not of amendment.

He had fled to the Lakes from the world because he was afraid to face the world, and had seen good reasons for his fears; and he filled his glass, and emptied it—too often—for the sake of the abatement of the terror and the "escape from life" which it furnished and he required. The aborigines not only regarded him kindly, making him welcome in their cot-

tages, but were convinced that he helped Wordsworth, who was of slower wit, to knock his great thoughts into poetical shape. Mrs. Wordsworth, to whom he seemed an amiable eccentric, descended now and again from Rydal Mount to undertake a systematic maternal inspection of his wardrobe.

Such is our picture, and it has lured us a long way from Ottery St. Mary. It is for the reader to judge whether he has been induced to waste his time upon an idle errand; the writer, at any rate, could not resist the temptation to undertake the journey. He does not pretend to hold Hartley Coleridge up to admiration. Far more worthy of admiration was Hartley's vigorous younger brother Derwent, whom we have seen achieving Success in Life as Principal of St. Mark's College, Chelsea, and Prebendary of St. Paul's: far more worthy also Hartley's sister Sara, who married her cousin the barrister, and was as clever as she was beautiful, and as well conducted as she was clever—who read Æschylus and Pindar with her brilliant son, who carried off the Newcastle Scholarship at Eton, and contributed to the *Quarterly Review*.

But we must not reserve all our interest, any more than we must reserve all our worship, for Success in Life; and there should be room in our breasts for other emotions besides enthusiasm at the spectacle of virtue rewarded. In

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Hartley's case, though such enthusiasm is out of the question, there is room for compassion, and even affection. He had no vices, but only weaknesses; he had a beautiful mind, and no one but himself suffered from the fact that he was launched with an invertebrate character upon a world in which backbone is indispensable.

## XV

### EAST DEVON

Joanna Southcott—Her love affairs and her prophecies  
—Jack Rattenbury, the King of Smugglers

PLACES which may conveniently be grouped together are Honiton, Axminster, Sidmouth, Seaton and Beer; but only Beer and Honiton have associations which invite us to dwell on them. Sidmouth, of course, is proud of its popularity with Royal visitors: George IV, the Duke and Duchess of Kent, with the future Queen Victoria, the Grand Duchess Hélène, who dazzled the eyes of the inhabitants with her pomp, and various others. But Beer also boasts its royal personage—Jack Rattenbury, known as the King of Smugglers; and Honiton, or rather Gittisham, close to the Honiton boundary, has its place in religious history, as the birthplace of Joanna Southcott.

Joanna's followers are now presumably extinct, but there were once about 100,000 of them. They included people who really ought to have known better—retired colonels, for in-

stance, and beneficed clergymen of the Established Church. It was a great feat for a Devonshire maid—and an old maid to boot—uneducated, or nearly so, and of a humble, not to say insignificant, station in life—to take rank as a prophetess and priestess, with such acolytes and such a congregation. The phenomenon, of course, is not quite without parallel in the history of religion; but it is quite remarkable enough to arrest the reader for a moment.

The father of the amazing young woman was a small farmer. She herself was successively a dairy-maid, a domestic servant, and a shop-girl at Honiton and Exeter. The wind, of course, bloweth where it listeth, but it is not often that it blows from any of these quarters in the direction of religious fanaticism. To have “admirers”—to “walk out”—to wear surprising hats: these are more usual pre-occupations in those ranks of life. Nor can it justly be said that Joanna turned to religion because suitors were “backward in coming forward.” Hearts, on the contrary, were laid rather freely at her feet: the heart of a farmer’s son, the heart of a footman in good service, the hearts of many other eligible postulants. But Joanna rejected all their advances. Her chief interest in life was church-going. At Exeter, she attended two services daily at the cathedral, and, in the intervals between those services, worshipped with the Wesleyan Methodists. And



then, all of a sudden, at the age of forty-two, she began to prophesy.

Her manner of prophesying was to write prophecies on sheets of paper, and seal them with a seal which she had picked up while sweeping out the shop after a sale. She went on doing that sort of thing for about ten years. Then, at last, she began to unseal her prophecies and print them. The bill of her printer—Mr. Brice, of Exeter—has been preserved, and includes the curious item, "For correcting the spelling and grammar of the prophecies 2/6." Perhaps—one never knows—the printer corrected a little more than the spelling and the grammar. That might help to explain the startling circumstance that some of the prophecies were found to have been fulfilled, though, of course, it is equally possible that their fulfilment may have been due to shrewdness or to accident. Their fulfilment, at any rate, brought Joanna adherents, and suggested a new departure.

Joanna now undertook to "seal the faithful." There were to be 144,000 of them. They were to be presented with certificates, signed with her name, and sealed with a red seal; and they were to keep those certificates by them, and present them when the millennium arrived. It was not true, though it was alleged, that she sold the certificates; but she nevertheless made mistakes. Some queer characters applied for certificates, and got them. One of the

"sealed" was Mary Bateman, who was hanged for murder at York. That untoward incident put an end to the sealing; but it did not check either Joanna's activity or her fame.

Already, in 1802, Joanna had announced herself at Exeter as "the Lamb's wife." Now, in 1813, she made a further announcement—that she was about to become "the mother of Shiloh"—and that at the advanced age of sixty-three. She withdrew from society, and made preparations for a confinement. Her adherents subscribed for a cradle and pap-spoons—£200 for the former, and £100 for the latter. Doctors were called in, and shook their puzzled heads. In the case of a younger woman they would have had no doubt as to the significance of the symptoms. In the case of a woman of sixty-three—even with the biblical precedent of Sarah to help them—they acknowledged themselves perplexed. It was a mystery—the world was full of mysteries—they could only "wait and see." And while they were waiting to see, Joanna died, and an autopsy settled the medical aspects of the question; but even so, the faithful kept their faith. When, as recently as 1874, the Regent's Park explosion shattered her tombstone, hopes were entertained of her return to life.

Those hopes, it need hardly be added, still await realization. Whether any survivors of the sect still cherish them one does not know,

but the story is, at any rate, worth recalling in any survey of Devonian celebrities. No other Devonshire maid has ever made quite so much stir in the world as this domestic servant whom the footman accused of "growing mad" because she rejected his honourable proposals.

And now for her rival in fame—Jack Rattenbury.

As a rule it is considered dangerous to tell the young too much about the exploits of desperate characters of Jack Rattenbury's class. They are apt to think that it is nobler (or at all events more romantic) to be a smuggler than a coastguardsman; but the risk in this case may be taken with an easy conscience. The moral, in so far as there is any, is all on the side of law and order. The story proves, in so far as it proves anything, that the way of transgressors is hard. Jack Rattenbury was as hard as nails, and an ingenious rascal to boot. He hit upon the subtle device of smuggling lace in the interior of disembowelled geese. But he did not grow rich on his ill-gotten gains; he did not wait till the end of his career for the punishment of his evil deeds, but got it in instalments; the termination of his nefarious adventures was sadly prosaic.

Jack is said to have written his autobiography for a Sidmouth bookseller to publish. In all probability it was really written on his behalf

by some local journalist who had been privileged to converse with him in the public-houses. His own prose style, if he had any, would, one surmises, have been too full of "terms of endearment" and other nautical expressions to please the ears of the polite; whereas the narrative, as it stands, might almost be read aloud by a curate in a girls' school. Still there it is, for what it may be worth; and it proves, out of the mouth of a King of Smugglers, that smuggling is not all beer and skittles. On the contrary, the bread of affliction and the water of affliction—to say nothing of the rope's end of affliction—played quite as large a part as beer and skittles in Jack Rattenbury's lot.

Perhaps, if it had not been for the press-gang, Jack might have been an honest man. That pressgang deprived him of his father before he was born—though his father was no sailor, but a cobbler; and Jack denounces its machinations in language worthy of a humanitarian platform, speaking of its unwarrantable interference with those who wish to pursue the peaceful, honest, and profitable paths of commerce. He himself tried to live honestly from time to time, first as privateer and then as a publican; but luck was against him. As a privateer he was captured by the French, though he managed to escape from them. As a publican he was oppressed by the brewer

whose tied house he administered. It really seemed as if there was nothing left for him to do but smuggle. So he smuggled, with the pressgang for ever on his heels.

There is a dramatic story of his escape from arrest by a sergeant of the South Devon Militia. The sergeant, with privates in attendance, ran him to earth in a public-house, and charged him with being a deserter from the Royal Navy:

“I endeavoured,” says Jack, “to keep as cool as possible, and in answer to his charge, I said, ‘Sergeant, you are surely labouring under an error; I have done nothing that can authorize you in taking me up or detaining me. You must surely have mistaken me for some other person.’ ”

Or words to that effect—for one cannot help suspecting that Jack really used a somewhat less polished diction; but Jack’s action, while he spoke, was hardly that of a man conscious that his character was above suspicion. He jumped through a trap-door into the cellar:

“I then threw off my jacket and shirt to prevent anyone from holding me, and having armed myself with a reaping-hook, and a knife, which I had in my pocket, I threw myself into an attitude of defence at the entrance, which was a half-hatch door, the lower part of which I shut, and then declared that I would kill the

first man that came near me, and that I would not be taken from the spot alive. At this the sergeant was evidently terrified, but he said to his men, 'Soldiers, do your duty; advance and seize him.' To which they replied, 'Sergeant, you proposed it; take the lead and set us an example, and we will follow.' No one offered to advance, and I remained in the position I have described for four hours, holding them at bay."

Until the women of the village ran in with a false story of a wreck on the beach, and, in the ensuing confusion, Jack made a successful bolt, and got safely off on board a boat. It is a thrilling episode, and shows Jack to have been terrible when roused. In another story we find him doing the State some service. Once when he was smuggling, a French privateer captured his brig and put a prize crew of four men on board of it. The captors, however, were weak at navigation, and when the weather thickened, they had to appeal to Jack to steer. He steered them his own way instead of theirs, and ultimately took them to Swanage, where he jumped overboard, swam ashore, and gave information, with the result that a Revenue cutter went out and brought the brig into Cowes the same evening.

One might have thought that the pressgang would have left Jack in peace after that exploit,

but they did not. They took him, and he escaped, and they took him again; and then, at last, after the long war with France was over, the preventive men gave him trouble. He incurred fines—no less a fine on one occasion than £4,500; and when he could not pay the fines, they sent him to Exeter gaol. At last they tired him out, and brought him to the conclusion that perhaps honesty was the best policy after all. So, in his old age, he became a fisherman, a pilot, and, as we have seen, an author—patronized by the Lord of the Manor. The final sentence of his autobiography runs as follows:

“The Smuggler gratefully acknowledges the kindness of the Right Honourable Lord Rolle, who now allows him one shilling per week for life.”

A shilling a week is not much of an old-age pension, but it suffices, at any rate, to pay for three weekly quarts of beer.

## XVI

### BARNSTAPLE

Sir Francis Gould's first caricature—John Gay—The tribute paid to Gay by Incledon, the singer

BARNSTAPLE is the place of origin of the present chronicler, and also—to name, for the moment, none but contemporaries—of Sir Francis Gould. It was from the window of that Old Bank in the High Street, with which the chronicler has hereditary associations, that Sir Francis Gould, not yet, of course, Sir Francis, exhibited the first of his cartoons which made a noise in the world. The story, though an old one, and often told by Sir Francis himself, will bear retelling.

The victim of the caricaturist's pencil was Mr. Trewin, the local gaoler, who did not accept the compliment in the same tolerant spirit as do the statesmen whose peculiarities the caricaturist nowadays portrays in the *Westminster Gazette*. He was very angry. He dreaded passing the Bank lest the caricature should be held up for him to look at. When business absolutely compelled him to pass the





SIR FRANCIS CARRUTHERS GOULD.  
By Himself.



window, he went by at the double, with his head turned the other way. His annoyance reached its climax when he had to walk past the cartoon in his official character, taking part in some municipal procession, and therefore unable either to hurry or to avert his gaze. At last he could contain his indignation no longer, but laid his grievance before the Mayor—a Mr. Guppy, who was the manager of one of the other banks. The ensuing dialogue ran somewhat as follows:

“Mr. Mayor, I be come to complain to ee.”

“Yes, Mr. Trewin. Of what have you to complain?”

“Mr. Mayor, I be come to complain to ee about that young Mr. Gould up to Benk.”

“Indeed, Mr. Trewin! What has Mr. Gould been doing to you?”

“He’s been drawin’ my shape, Mr. Mayor.”

“Drawing your portrait, Mr. Trewin?”

“Well, Mr. Mayor, I wouldn’t ‘xactly like to say as ‘twas my portrait, neither. Fact is, Mr. Mayor, that young Mr. Gould’s been a-carica-toorin’ o’ me. He’s draw’d a picture o’ me, Mr. Mayor, makin’ me like a Christmas peg with an orange in its mouth, and I don’t hold with it, Mr. Mayor. I don’t hold with it, and I want un locked up.”

“Locked up, Mr. Trewin? Nonsense! You really should not take this notice of a young man’s folly.”

"Young man's folly, is it? Then maybe you don't know he's been a-caricatoorin' o' yu tu, Mr. Mayor?"

As, in fact, he had. The Mayor was a Dissenter, fond of improving occasions and speaking words in season; and the caricaturist had represented him as a Methodist preacher, exhorting the members of the borough police force to avail themselves of the means of grace. He was as angry as Mr. Trewin—and, of course, as helpless. It was in vain that the gaoler appealed to him to vindicate his dignity:

"Don't ee put up with it, Mr. Mayor. Don't ee put up with it. Have un locked up. Send un down to gaol, and leave un to me. I'll look after un for ee."

So Mr. Trewin pleaded—but in vain. The Mayor understood the limits of his power, and let the matter drop; and the caricaturist shortly afterwards went to London, and became so famous that a later Mayor and Corporation were proud to offer him the freedom of the borough.

And now, having begun the history of Barnstaple at the end, search for points of interest in its earlier annals.

The borough is of great antiquity, being mentioned in *Domesday*, and having remnants of fortifications which date from the reign of Athelstan. The curious may pursue their study

of these matters, and discover the part played by Barnstaple in the Armada, and the various civil wars, in the *Memorials of Barnstaple*, written by a namesake of the present writer, and in the reprint of the *Barnstaple Records*, edited by J. R. Chanter and Mr. Thomas Wainwright, from whom the writer acquired the rudiments of Latin at the Barnstaple Grammar-school—the school of Bishop Jewel, and Thomas Harding, the convert to Catholicism with whom Jewel engaged in controversy, and Judge Dodderidge, and John Dodderidge, and Fortescue, the Master of the Rolls, and John Gay, the poet. Here it is only possible to glance at the most tempting episodes and the best-known names. The story of the Huguenots who fled from their own country on account of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and landed on the Barnstaple Quay, during church time, one Sunday morning, may well detain us for a moment.

The Barnstaple citizens, it seems, finding the Huguenots on the quay, embraced them, and gave them hospitality in their houses until they found employment at their trades. One of them, a M. Fontaine, encountered even warmer hospitality than he desired. His host was a wealthy bachelor, Mr. Downe, whose house was kept for him by his sister, a lady of considerable means. “I should mention,” says M. Fontaine, whose memoirs have been published in America, “that there was nothing

attractive, but rather the reverse, in the personal appearance of Miss Downe; she was short, thin, sallow, and marked with the smallpox." But Miss Downe, though thus ill-favoured, had a susceptible heart.

She proposed marriage to M. Fontaine. Or rather, being unable to make the proposal herself because of her ignorance of his language, she caused her brother to make it for her in a mixture of dog Latin and French of Stratford-atte-Bow. She knew that M. Fontaine had brought an affianced bride with him from France; but she had considered that difficulty and thought out a means of resolving it. There was her brother,—he would be a much better match for Mlle. Boursaquotte than M. Fontaine, just as she would be a much better for M. Fontaine than Mlle. Boursaquotte. The chance of making four people happy instead of two ought not, on any consideration, to be missed. So she argued. But neither M. Fontaine nor Mlle. Boursaquotte saw the matter in that light, so that Miss Downe remained a spinster, while Mr. Downe, whose heart does not seem to have been in the adventure into which he had let his sister lure him, not only gave the betrothed foreigners his blessing, but entertained them and all the other refugees at his house on the day after their wedding.

That is one of M. Fontaine's stories of the Huguenots, and another relates to a second batch

of Huguenots who were to have joined them, but failed to do so because of their misplaced confidence in a piratical captain. Embarking at Bordeaux, they asked the captain to take care of their money for them. The captain willingly consented; but the sight of so much gold moved him to cupidity. Instead of taking his vessel to England, he marooned it on a lonely beach on the coast of Spain, rowed ashore with his crew to divide the plunder, and left his passengers on the wreck to be drowned. One of the women passengers proved unexpectedly buoyant by reason of her balloon-like skirts, and there seemed a chance of her floating safely to land, so the captain went out to her with a boat-hook, and held her under water until her petticoats were so soaked that she ceased to be buoyant. Then he went to Cadiz, invested his ill-gotten gains in the privateering industry, and was no more heard of.

And now for a word about John Gay.

Gay lived, most appropriately, in Joy Street; and his biography is full of such happy collocations of names. Living in Joy Street, he was taught at the grammar-school by Mr. Luck. Going to London, he wrote *The Beggar's Opera*, which was produced by Mr. Rich, and, as the punster put it, "made Gay rich and Rich gay." One does not know a great deal about his life in Barnstaple, but one does know a little—that

little having been brought to light, or, at all events, put on paper, in consequence of the discovery and identification of his old arm-chair.

The discoverer was Henry Lee who, in 1809, and for some years afterwards, was proprietor of the Barnstaple Theatre. He heard that the chair had been sold by auction with the effects of some deceased member of the family, and he traced it to the shop of a Mr. Symonds, from whom he bought it. Finding it a somewhat damaged piece of goods, he sent it to one Crook, a cabinet-maker, to be repaired. Crook, in the act of repairing it, found that it contained a secret drawer; and the drawer was full of unpublished poems in Gay's hand-writing. Crook handed them over to Lee, and Lee decided to print them, together with a few little things of his own, and persuaded Gay's nephew, the Rev. Joseph Baller, to contribute an introductory memoir of the poet.

It is a very thin little memoir—one needs to supplement it from other sources; but it contains the only authentic reminiscence of Gay's childhood, in the shape of a note from the Rector of Instow, who had apparently been applied to for information:

“DEAR SIR,—I knew a gentleman who had been Gay's school-fellow who informed me that his first poetical effort was in consequence of



one of his playmates shooting a sparrow in Barnstaple churchyard."

Side by side with that letter we may print Gay's schoolmaster's claim to have instructed him in the poetic craft. It is found in the schoolmaster's dedication of his own poems to the Duke of Queensberry, and runs as follows:

" O Queensbury ! could happy Gay  
This offering to thee bring,  
'Tis his, my lord (he'd smiling say),  
Who taught thy Gay to sing."

And as it is on record that Luck and his pupils used to get up dramatic entertainments at the school, there may be something in the claim.

Perhaps Barnstaple has not made as much of Gay as it might have made if its citizens had been more thoroughgoing hero-worshippers; but one act of public homage—that of Incledon, the singer,—must not be left unrecorded.

Incledon was not a Barnstaple man, though the name is a Barnstaple name, and an Incledon of sufficient note to be mentioned in the *Dictionary of National Biography* once lived at Pilton House; but let that pass. Incledon, the singer, came to Barnstaple when at the height of his fame. He knew all about Gay, and he was enthusiastic. He displayed his enthusiasm by stationing himself in front of Gay's house in Joy Street, and singing a

long selection from Gay's repertory. In order to realize the full effect of the performance, we must think, not only of his voice, but also of his personal appearance. He was a gaudy, florid man. Crabb Robinson, in his diary, speaks of him as wearing "seven rings on his fingers, five seals on his watch-ribbon, and a gold snuff-box." The rendering of "Black-eyed Susan" by such a magnificent minstrel in a public thoroughfare strikes one as indeed a signal tribute to the genius of Barnstaple's most famous poet.

The tribute seems the more generous because there is very little about Barnstaple and the neighbourhood in Gay's verse. Still there is this about Coddon (which the poet styles Cotton) Hill:

" But the hill of all hills, the most pleasing to me,  
Is famed Cotton, the pride of North Devon ;  
When its summit I climb, O, I then seem to be  
Just as if I approached nearer Heaven."

Which is poor stuff, and probably an early effort preserved, for the sake of early associations, in the secret drawer. The drawer, at any rate, contains more valuable treasures than that—among them a certain "Ladies' Petition to the Honourable the House of Commons." It is a petition on behalf of women's rights, as these were envisaged in the eighteenth century. The petitioners are spinsters. They do

not, like our modern spinsters, demand votes—they demand husbands. For instance:

“ A maiden was designed by Nature  
A weakly and imperfect creature,  
So liable to err or stray,  
Her wants require a guide, a stay,  
And then, so timorous of sprites,  
She dreads to be alone at nights !  
Say what she will, do what she can,  
Her heart still gravitates to man ;  
From whence 'tis evident as light  
That marriage is a woman's right.”

*Et cetera* ; the composition being little likely to satisfy either New Women or those of an older school of thought. The former will complain that the poet has calumniated them by attributing to them an ambition which they are far from entertaining. The latter will point out, with plausible indignation, that, though he formulated their grievance, he did nothing to redress it—seeing that he died a bachelor of forty-three, with a fortune of £6,000. Perhaps, however, they will derive some comfort from the knowledge that he died of indigestion—a malady which a judicious marriage with a notable housewife might have enabled him to escape.

## XVII

### BARNSTAPLE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

Edward Capern, the postman-poet—Shelley at Lynton  
—Parson Jack Russell, perpetual curate of Swym-  
bridge

JOHN LATEY, the editor of the *Illustrated London News*, came from Barnstaple, where his father kept a baker's shop. So did Mr. Petter of the publishing house of Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, now Cassell and Company. Edward Capern, the postman-poet, whose round was from Bideford to Buckland Brewer, is buried at Braunton, and contributed many of his lyrics to the *North Devon Journal*.

Perhaps there is something in the calling of a postman which conduces to the writing of poetry. It may well have been so, at any rate, in the case of rural postmen in the happy days before the introduction of the parcels post impeded their progress with cumbrous packages. So that while one searches vainly for, say, a dustman-poet, one finds postmen-poets dotted freely about the slopes of Parnassus. There is James Dryden Hosken,

postman of Helston, to whose *Verses by the Way* Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch contributed an introduction, and there is Sylvain Bargues, the French postman, who delivers, or used to deliver, letters on the banks of the Dordogne, and has had his lines in the magazines and his portrait in the papers. But Edward Capern was the postman-poet *par excellence*. He walked thirteen miles a day for ten shillings a week; but that was better than earning double the money by minding a machine in a factory. He saw nature in all her moods; he heard the bees hum, and the birds sing; and he felt that he must sing, too, out of the very gladness of his heart.

He was not a very great poet. One must not presume to place him in the same class with Robert Burns, the ploughman-poet. He lacked education. A relative of the present writer once taught him in a night school, and found him a dull pupil, slow to grasp the principles of orthography and syntax. He did grasp them, however, in the end, and those of prosody as well; and he had the soul of a poet, if not the genius, and was not hindered by poverty or material cares from perceiving the beauty of the world. Elihu Burritt, the learned blacksmith, once accompanied him on his rounds, and explained to the servants at every house at which he called how great an honour it was to them to receive their letters from the hands of a

disciple of the Muses. The servants, it is to be feared, were not greatly impressed; but there was, nevertheless, a public which took an interest in Capern.

No less a person than Prince Lucien Bonaparte was once taken to see him by another Devonian poet, Henry Baird, who wrote in the Devonshire dialect under the pseudonym of "Nathan Hogg." There is an account of that visit in a corner of an old number of *T.P.'s Weekly*:

"He was living in a small cottage, and entertained us heartily and hospitably, reading several of his poems to us and singing others to tunes composed by himself, and accompanied by the concertina, which he played skilfully. The 'parlour' was nearly filled with a large round table, simply crowded with presentation volumes from poets and authors of the day."

The picture is a pretty one, and a unique one, and worth preserving. The Laureate, one feels sure, though he may see more of princes than Capern ever saw, does not sing his compositions to them to the accompaniment of a concertina, which does indeed strike one as an inadequate substitute for a lyre. But then Capern belonged to a simpler age, as well as a simpler society, than Mr. Alfred Austin.

From Capern to Shelley is a far step, but it

must be taken. There is a point of resemblance between their two cases. Just as Barnstaple, at first, did not recognize Capern as a poet, but only as a postman, so, at first, it did not recognize Shelley as a poet, but only as a seditious pamphleteer. He burst upon the town in that character in somewhat curious circumstances.

There was a certain Mr. Syle, a printer and stationer, who has been called the John Murray of Barnstaple. To him there entered, one day, a wild-eyed youth who desired him to print a letter to Lord Ellenborough, protesting against the imprisonment of Daniel Isaac Eaton for publishing a book which the Courts had regarded as a blasphemous libel on the Holy Scriptures. It was a good order, and Mr. Syle took it and fulfilled it, and dismissed the matter from his mind. A few days later, however, a strange man, with a weird Irish brogue, was discovered in the streets of Barnstaple distributing tracts, in which appeared the abominable sentence, "Government has no rights." Questioned, he explained that he was acting on instructions from a young gentleman living at Lynton, who had given him half a crown for his trouble.

That explanation was not good enough for the police or for the Mayor, and further enquiries were instituted. It was established that the distributor of the tracts was one Daniel Healey, the servant of a Mr. Shelley who was

lodging at Lynmouth, and that this Mr. Shelley was the author of the Letter to Lord Ellenborough which Mr. Syle had printed, and was the son of Mr. Timothy Shelley, the Member for Shoreham. He was also, of course—though that was a later development—Percy Bysshe Shelley, the poet. Daniel Healey was fined £200 in the Mayor's Court, and imprisoned because he was unable to pay that fine, and a close watch was kept on Shelley's movements.

Lynmouth was, in those days, just beginning to be known. There was already a guide-book, three pages in length. Coutts the banker and the Marchioness of Bute had visited the village and reported favourably. The original Valley of Rocks Hotel had been opened on the site of the present Globe Hotel, in 1807. A Mr. William Litson, son of a local schoolmaster, had taken some cottages and furnished them with a view to taking lodgers. One of these cottages attracted Shelley on his way from Chepstow to Ilfracombe. He interrupted his journey and spent several weeks there, departing precipitately for Wales when the pamphlet published at Barnstaple began to make trouble.

The party must have been a queer one. It consisted not only of Shelley and his wife, Harriet, the barmaidenly maiden whom he had carried off from the home of her father, the re-



tired licensed victualler, but also included Miss Elizabeth Hitchener—a schoolmistress, of about thirty years of age, whom the poet had persuaded to throw up her school and travel about with him in order that they might "talk about virtue" by night and "write for the good of mankind" by day. One might have expected Mrs. Shelley to object, but she does not seem to have done so. This is what she wrote on the subject to her friend, Mrs. Nugent, of Dublin:

"Our friend, Miss Hitchener, has come to us. She is very busy writing for the good of mankind. She is very dark in complexion, with a great quantity of long black hair. She talks a great deal. If you like great talkers, she will suit you. . . . I know you would love her did you know her. Her age is thirty. She looks like as if she was only twenty-four, and her spirits are excellent. She laughs and talks and writes all day."

And Mrs. Shelley also told Mrs. Nugent what she thought of Lynmouth:

"We have taken the only cottage there was, which is most beautifully situated, commanding a fine view of the sea, with mountains at the side and behind us. Vegetation is more luxurious here than in any part of England. We have roses and myrtle creeping up the sides of the

house, which is thatched at the top. It is such a little place that it seems more like a fairy scene than anything in reality. All the houses are built in the cottage style, and I suppose there are not more than thirty in all. We send to Barnstaple for everything, and our letters come but twice a week. . . . It seems as if Nature had intended this place should be so romantic and shut out from all other intercourse with the neighbouring villages and towns."

A faithful description, no doubt, of Lynmouth a hundred years ago. The villagers thought of Shelley, not as a man of genius who did them honour by dwelling in their midst, but as the man who used to stand on the doorstep of his cottage blowing soap-bubbles. Nor was that his only eccentricity. It also occurred to him that, as difficulties attended the distribution of his pamphlets in the streets of Barnstaple, he had better find other means of circulating them. So, as is written in *The Romantic Life of Shelley*:

"He corked them up in empty bottles, and pitched the bottles into the Bristol Channel in the same spirit of evangelistic zeal in which missionaries of another school of thought leave tracts lying about in cabs and railway station waiting-rooms. Other copies of the same document were dispersed over Exmoor by means of toy balloons, on the offchance that a copy here

or there might stir the stagnant pool of some bucolic mind."

A pleasant pastime while it lasted—a curious combination of jest and earnest. But when Daniel Healey went to Barnstaple gaol for distributing Shelley's tracts, and Shelley was unable to pay the fine which would have released him, his position at Lynmouth ceased to be agreeable. His friend and teacher, William Godwin, who was spending an autumn holiday in the West of England, landed one day on Lynmouth beach, meaning to pay him a surprise visit, but found no one there to receive him. The birds had flown; the nest was empty; the bill had not been paid. But the landlady, whom Godwin interviewed, told him that she "quite loved the Shelleys"—loved them so well, in fact, that she had let them leave in her debt without exercising her lien on their luggage. It is pleasant to be able to add that they paid her subsequently, though only by instalments.

And now we will leave Shelley and speak of Parson Jack Russell, Perpetual Curate of Swymbridge.

One is for or against Parson Jack accordingly as one favours or opposes foxhunting as a recreation for the clergy; but there was an important difference between him and some other foxhunting parsons. Some of these have pursued the fox to the neglect of their parochial

duties. There was Parson Jack Froude, for instance, who is notorious; and there was Parson Beanes, concerning whom we have already quoted Parson Herrick's saying that:

"Six days he holloas so much breath away  
That on the seventh he can nor preach nor pray."

Parson Jack Russell was not that sort of fox-hunting parson. He zealously fulfilled all his functions, and he preached so well that his parishioners minded him, holding, it may be, that so good a judge of a horse must be an equally good judge of a religion. Consequently he was able to withstand Henry of Exeter, with a mind conscious of rectitude, when that peremptory prelate remonstrated with him because he not only hunted, but also kept the hounds, and encouraged his curate, Mr. Sleeman, to hunt with him. The two were interviewed by the bishop simultaneously, and the interview is thus reproduced in Russell's Life:

" 'Will you give up your hounds?'

" 'No, my lord; I decline doing so.'

"He then turned to the curate and said, 'Your licence, sir, I revoke; and I only regret that the law does not enable me to deal with the *graver* offender in a far more summary manner.'

" 'I am very happy to find you can't, my lord,' said Russell, 'and still happier to know that I have done nothing in contravention of

the law, and that it protects me. May I ask then, my lord, if you revoke Mr. Sleeman's licence, who is to take the duty at Landkey next Sunday?'

" 'Mr. Sleeman may do it.'

" 'And who the following Sunday?' enquired Russell.

" 'Mr. Sleeman again,' responded the bishop, 'if by that time you have not secured another curate.'

" 'I shall take no steps to do so, my lord, and, moreover, I shall be very cautious as to whom I admit into my church,' replied Russell significantly."

And the nature of the precautions which Parson Jack was prepared to take is illustrated by the story of a conversation between a Barnstaple grocer and Will Chapple, the Swymbridge parish clerk:

" 'Well, Mr. Chapple, and have 'ee got a coorate yet for Swymbridge?'

" 'Not yet, sir—master's 'nation partic'ler; 't isn't this man nor 't isn't that as'll suit un; but here's his advertisement (pulling out a copy of the *North Devon Journal*), so I reckon he'll soon get one now.'

" 'Wanted a curate for Swymbridge; must be a gentleman of moderate and orthodox views.'

" 'Orthodox, Mr. Chapple! What doth he mean by that?' enquired the grocer.

“ ‘ Well,’ said the clerk in some perplexity, knowing the double nature of the curate’s work, secular as well as sacred, ‘ I can’t exactly say ; but I reckon ’tis a man as can ride pretty well.’ ”

And that the duties of Parson Jack’s curates were indeed secular as well as sacred is attested of a hunting story which one of the curates relates :

“ The hounds, with a grand scent, having brought their fox up to the bridge, had there come to a check. A hound called Castor, however, hitting the fox under the archway of the bridge, through which the flood had carried him, dashed into the angry river, and by some means became unable either to pass under the arch or land on the opposite bank. ‘ The hound will be drowned ; jump in and save him,’ shouted Russell to me in a state of the wildest panic.’ ”

One can understand that Russell was particular in his choice of curates, if those were the orders he was liable to give them ; but no matter. We will conclude with a story which shows Russell himself using his prodigious physical strength for a worthy purpose. The red deer was the quarry this time, and the hounds had brought it to bay, when a strange thing happened :

“ An old man, muddled with cider, went up and attempted to caress the infuriated animal, addressing it thus: ‘ Sober, now, sober; don’t ’ee be scared, my pretty dear.’ On which the deer, mistrusting his motive, made a fierce lunge at him, but missing a vital spot, drove his brow-antler right through the old fellow’s hand, and then and there would certainly have killed him but for Russell’s immediate help. He rushed in, collared the deer by the root of his near-side antler, dragged the man’s hand off the reeking tine, and then rolling over and over with the deer into the bed of the brook, the animal forcing him under a footbridge, and kneeling upon him in the water.”

And so they fought until a farmer came up with a rope and caught the deer’s head in a noose, so that it could be dragged off and killed, and its antlers taken to adorn the hall in Baron’s Down.

## XVIII

### BIDEFORD

The Bideford worthies—The death of Sir Richard Grenville—Charles Kingsley

IT would be a simpler task to write a book about Bideford than to condense the available material into a chapter. The town has, indeed, had many long periods of somnolence in which nothing in particular happened; but one begins to hear of it—or at least of its neighbourhood—in the very early days of English history; and down to the very latest times one finds it throwing up, or affording temporary shelter to, memorable men in many departments of activity—a few who were famous, and a good many others who, at least, were interesting.

The men of Bideford slew Hubba the Dane, with eight hundred or more of his retainers, on Northam Burrows in the year 879. They also claim to have produced the last witches who were put to death for witchcraft in the West Country in 1682: witches who boasted that they had seen the Devil, but were divided



in opinion as to whether he looked "like a gentleman" or "like a lion." Their bridge dates at least from the fourteenth century, and is probably still older; their first charter was granted to them by Henry III; it was granted to a Grenville, and the original Grenville was a companion of the Conqueror. As for their great men, it will be well to tick them off, before speaking more particularly of one or two of the greatest.

1. Sir Richard Grenville, Elizabeth's Vice-Admiral of England.

2. Sir Bevil Grenville, the dashing cavalier, celebrated in Parson Hawker's dashing, but not very clerical, song:

" Arise ! and away ! for the King and the land ;  
Farewell to the couch and the pillow :  
With spear in the rest, and with rein in the hand,  
Let us rush on the foe like a billow.

" Call the hind from the plough, and the herd from the fold,  
Bid the wassailer cease from his revel :  
And ride for old Stowe, where the banner's unrolled,  
For the cause of King Charles and Sir Bevil."

3. Steven Borough, who, with Chancellor, was the first to take an English ship into the White Sea in the quest for the North-East passage, and became Elizabeth's Chief Pilot of England.

4. Steven's brother, William, Elizabeth's

Comptroller of the Navy, whom we have already met quarrelling with Drake at Cadiz.

5. George Monk (said to have been born at Potheridge), who brought back Charles II when the country was tired of Richard Cromwell.

6. Edward Capern, the postman-poet, spoken of in the Barnstaple chapter, who was, for a time, letter-carrier between Bideford and Buckland Brewer.

7. Charles Kingsley, whose fame has caused Bideford and its vicinity to be called the Kingsley country.

8. Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who got his education at Westward Ho, and has immortalized the life of that Academy in *Stalky and Co.*

It is a goodly list, which one could easily lengthen if one were challenged to do so; and the question is—what selection to make when it is impossible to speak in full of all. But one choice, at any rate, is so clear that there is no way of avoiding it. Whatever one passes over, one must infallibly recall the story celebrated in that ballad of Tennyson's which begins:

“ At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,  
And a pinnacle, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from  
far away :

‘ Spanish ships of war at sea ! we have sighted fifty-  
three ! ’

Then swore Sir Thomas Howard : ‘ ‘Fore God I am no  
coward ;

But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,

And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.

We are six ships of the line ; can we fight with fifty-three ? ' ' ' ' ,

But Sir Richard Grenville said that he both could and would fight them, with his one ship only ; and he sailed out to meet them, inspiring terror in the hearts of the Spaniards, who believed him to be a Superman, if not a Demon.

" Of so hard a complexion was he," writes one of them, " that I have been told by divers credible persons who stood and beheld him that he would carouse three or four glasses of wine, and take the glasses between his teeth and crush them in pieces and swallow them down."

He, truly, was an antagonist whom they dared not despise, though he came against them with only one ship against fifty-three ; and Froude writes eloquently of his intrepid resolve :

" Hardly, as it seems to us, if the most glorious actions which are set like jewels in the history of mankind are weighed one against the other in the balance, hardly will those 300 Spartans, who in the summer morning sate 'combing their long hair for death' in the passes of Thermopylæ, have earned a more lofty estimate for themselves than this one crew of modern Englishmen."

It was a fight which, by all the rules of naval warfare, should have been over in a few minutes; and it was a fight which, in fact, lasted all through the summer night. Galleon after galleon came alongside the little *Revenge* and tried to board her; galleon after galleon drew off again, "having that within her womb which had made her ill-content." And so:

"Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,  
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle thunder and flame;  
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.  
 For some were sunk, and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more—  
 God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?"

Never assuredly since that Battle of Thermopylæ of which Froude spoke; but, of course, the end was inevitable. The little *Revenge* had, at last, to surrender, though on terms; and the Spaniards, with an honour which was by no means invariable in the warfare of those days, faithfully observed the terms to which they had agreed. The Spanish admiral complimented the enemy who, with his small resources, had given him so much trouble, "commending his valour and worthiness, being unto them a rare spectacle, and a resolution seldom approved." And then Sir Richard, who was wounded to the death,

made that memorable last speech which rings with equal eloquence in Tennyson's verse and the contemporary chronicler's stately old-fashioned prose:

“ In a few hours Sir Richard, feeling his end approaching, showed not any sign of faintness, but spake these words in Spanish, and said, ‘ Here I die, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do that hath fought for his country, queen, religion, and honour. Whereby my soul most joyfully departeth out of this body, and shall always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier that hath done his duty as he was bound to do.’ When he had finished these or other such-like words, he gave up the ghost with great and stout courage, and no man could perceive any sign of heaviness in him.”

The defeat had been more glorious than most victories, and was recognized as such by the victors, and avenged, just as the coming of the Armada had been, by the sea itself. A fleet of Spanish merchantmen came up, immediately after the battle, increasing their strength to 140 sail; and then a storm arose and scattered them. Of the 140 no fewer than 108 foundered at sea or were wrecked on the Azores,—a catastrophe which brought out all the Spanish superstition:

“As some of them openly said in the Isle of Tercerra, that they believed verily God would consume them, and that he took part with the Lutherans and heretics, . . . saying further that, so soon as they had thrown the body of the Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Grenville overboard, they verily thought that, as he had a devilish faith and religion, and therefore the devil loved him, so he presently sunk into the bottom of the sea and down into hell, where he raised up all the devils to the revenge of his death, and that they brought so great a storm and torments upon the Spaniards because they only maintained the Roman and Catholic religion. Such and the like blasphemies against God they ceased not openly to utter.”

So the curtain may be dropped on the intrepid old sea-dog and raised again on the intrepid Radical parson, Charles Kingsley, who had something in common with him: courage, energy, hatred of Popery, and a way of laying about him which caused the superstitious to blaspheme.

He spent, as a matter of fact, comparatively little of his life in Devonshire; but he spent enough of it, not only to be claimed as a Man of Devon, but to be proud of the title. His father, at the time of his birth, was Vicar of Holne, on the edge of Dartmoor, and afterwards, for a little while, held the living of Clovelly;



*Photo]*

CHARLES KINGSLEY'S HOUSE AT BIDEFORD.

*[Saunders.*





and Charles Kingsley's years at Clovelly were the impressionable years. He spoke of himself proudly as "a West-Countryman born and bred"; and he never forgot that, as a boy, he had played with the fisher-boys on the Clovelly beach. The memory is recalled in an eloquent passage in his *Prose Idylls*:

"Hardly an old playmate of mine but is drowned and gone.

" ' Their graves are scattered far and wide,  
By mount, by stream, and sea.'

One poor little fellow's face starts out of the depths of memory as fresh as ever, my especial pet and birds'-nesting companion as a boy—a little, delicate, precocious, large-brained child, who might have written books some day if he had been a gentleman's son; but when his father's ship was wrecked they found him, left alone of all the crew, just as he had been lashed to the rigging by loving and dying hands, but cold and stiff, the little soul beaten out of him by the cruel waves before it had time to show what growth there might have been in it."

On the impressions of those years many other impressions were afterwards imposed. Kingsley passed away to other scenes, and was swept by winds of doctrine which seldom blow as far as the West Country. He wrestled with new religions and old political prejudices. He was

esteemed a dangerous man—a firebrand—though to modern eyes he seems little more than a Conservative with a good heart and a burning indignation against privileged persons who abused their privileges; but the essential man in him was not the preacher, or the social reformer, but the poet. And as a poet—and also as a prose poet—he turned his face to the West. An interesting instance of his doing so is related by the late Bishop Stubbs, of Truro.

It was in London, at the time of the first great Exhibition. In St. John's Church, Fitzroy Square, Kingsley preached, at the invitation of the incumbent, a sermon on the Message of the Church to Labouring Men. He said in it that the business of a Christian priest was to preach "freedom, equality, and brotherhood in fullest, deepest, widest meaning of these words." It is difficult in these days to discover any startling impropriety in the statement; but it was unconventional when it was uttered, and there are some people who are always shocked out of their boots by any unconventional utterance.

The incumbent of St. John's, Fitzroy Square, was such a person. He interrupted Kingsley when he was about to give the blessing, and rose in his place to denounce the doctrine as "dangerous and untrue." Kingsley was bitterly hurt,—not so much by the personal insult as by the passing thought that perhaps, after all, his zeal for justice was a rock of offence to weaker

brethren. He made no reply to the remonstrance, and hardly any to the indignant sympathizers in the congregation who crowded round him, asking to shake his hand, as he passed out of the church; but he took the train to Eversley, and, instead of going to bed, paced the lawn in front of the rectory until the small hours of the morning.

Not nursing his wrath, however, against the wooden-headed Vicar of St. John's, Fitzroy Square; not worrying his head any longer about the functions of the Christian priesthood, nor thanking God that he was not as other men were—even that high and dry old Tory who mistook the prejudices of his caste for the eternal laws. All that was forgotten, and he found his comfort in composing the memorable lines:

“ Three fishers went sailing away to the West,  
    Away to the West as the sun went down ;  
Each thought of the woman who loved him the best,  
    And the children stood watching them out of the  
        town ;  
For men must work, and women must weep,  
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,  
    Though the harbour bar be moaning.”

It was an answer of a kind to his sanctimonious assailant's polemics. It breathed the sentiment which conquered in the end and endeared Charles Kingsley to his generation. And this is, perhaps, the place in which to say that his winning personality inspired so much affection

that his contemporaries overrated him,—not as a poet, but as an intellectual force.

Intellectually, it must be allowed, Charles Kingsley moved within somewhat narrow limitations: some limitations peculiar to himself, and others imposed by his aristocratic birth and training, and by his membership of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. Only a clergyman, one feels sure, would have had the assurance to accept the Regius Professorship of History at Cambridge with his inadequate smattering of the subject; but it does not seem to have occurred to him that he strained modesty in doing so. History was not, for him, a branch of scientific investigation, but a collection of old stories from which to draw modern morals; and scholars naturally inclined to the view that, however valuable the morals might be, a pulpit rather than a professorial chair was the place in which to draw them. And rightly, for pulpits are many and professorial chairs are few; so that there is no need whatsoever for the occupants of the latter to perform the functions for which the former have been provided.

In controversy, too,—and more particularly in his controversy with Cardinal Newman—Kingsley was mentally inadequate to his task. He was too conscious of his own rectitude to think before he spoke, with the result that Newman, who had a subtler mind, and had learnt all that Oxford can teach of dialectics, was able to play





CHARLES KINGSLEY.

with him as a cat plays with a mouse: a pity, seeing that his case against Newman, if properly stated, was a good one. Nor can it justly be said that, even as a social reformer, Kingsley grasped the essential factors of the problem, or set out to solve it in a spirit which a democratic enthusiast can approve.

He called himself a Christian Socialist, but it is doubtful whether he knew what Socialism is, and it is certain that his Christianity was tempered by the habits of thought of a member of the ruling caste. His Socialism certainly would not be recognized as such by our contemporary Fabians; and his Christianity, when all is said, was of the nature of a compromise. There is no need to argue whether it was too broad or too narrow. The essential thing is that Kingsley never grasped the revolutionary spirit of the Gospels from which it is derived or understood how the compilers of the Church Catechism had perverted their doctrines in the interest of the upper and wealthier classes. He was, that is to say, a Conservative in grain, though a Conservative who was so much better than his creed that he seemed, from time to time, to be untrue to it; but the essential Conservatism came out at last when he defended Governor Eyre for the brutalities which he had perpetrated in Jamaica, and so inferentially affirmed the right of every man to wallop his own nigger.

Hence the necessity of moderating our en-

thusiasm when we speak of him,—or at all events when we speak of those departments of his activity to which he himself attached most importance. He was not so muddle-headed and prejudiced as most of the early and mid-Victorians; but still he was prejudiced and muddle-headed. On the other hand, he was a patriot who had inherited a double portion of the Elizabethan spirit, and a poet who had retained the Elizabethan wonder at the glories of the world.

One may call him a poet, indeed, not only in the narrow English, but also in the broader French sense: a man who, whether his medium was prose or verse, created and interpreted, and saw what the plain man could not see, and helped the plain man to see it. The “renascence of wonder” is in his books as surely as in the writings of the poetical school, for whose praise Mr. Theodore Watts Dunton coined the phrase; and with it there went a robust faith in the special destiny of the British race which those other romantic writers did not share. As long as the race continues to believe in its own destiny, it will not allow his memory or that of *Westward Ho!* to die.



## XIX

### LUNDY ISLAND

Primitive man in Lundy—The Mariscos—Edward II  
—Sir Lewis Stukely—The pirate kings—The convict  
settlement—The Kingdom of Heaven

LUNDY, minute island though it is—three and a half miles by less than one—presents its riddle: the sepulchral remains of certain primitive men (of the Stone Age, it is said) akin to those of whom we find traces on Dartmoor and in the Torquay caves.

How did they get there? There were no ships in those days—only coracles and dug-outs—boats most unsuitable for the navigation of the stormy waters of the Bristol Channel. It is almost as incredible that primitive man paddled across in a canoe as that he swam across; and even if the fact that he did so be accepted, the mystery of his motive remains. Why take all that trouble to settle in Lundy when the mainland of England was still so far from being overcrowded? It must have had then, as it still has, a bleak and misty climate, a poor soil, and no natural resources worth

speaking of. Were there already, in those pre-historic times, men who shrank from the bustle of the mart, and the competitive struggle, and sighed for an "escape from life" in contemplative solitude?

One cannot say; and one can as little conjecture why Lundy was thought worth possessing and fighting about by the turbulent barons of the Middle Age. They had ships, it is true,—of a kind,—but not ships in which the voyage to Lundy can have been comfortable or safe. Lundy, in their time, must have been a difficult place to get to—and a still more difficult place to get away from; and the life there must have been very circumscribed and dull. One would have thought that, in such a case, even the sense of property would have lost its magic: that no one would have cared to be king of such a castle, or troubled to warn trespassers that they would be prosecuted. But it seems not. When Lundy Island floats into the ken of the historian, in the reign of Henry II, we find men already fighting for it.

The Mariscos then held it; and the decree went forth from the King that the Mariscos were to be turned out, the Knights Templars being told that they might have the island if they could take it. The history of the time is obscure; but the Record Office preserves memoranda of a tax levied in Devonshire and Cornwall, to defray the cost of a siege of Lundy,

and to protect the coasts of the two counties against the piratical excursions of the islanders. The sum of forty-seven pounds sixteen shillings was raised for these important purposes; and one has to picture the island as a stronghold of robber barons, who swooped and stole whenever time and tide were favourable. It is a difficult picture to draw; but old Mathew Paris gives particulars:

“ William de Marisco ” (he writes), “ son of Geoffrey de Marisco, taking refuge in an island in the Bristol Channel, called Londy, impregnable from the nature of the place, and having attached to himself many outlaws and malefactors, subsisted by a piracy of goods, more especially of wine and provisions, making frequent sudden eruptions on the adjacent lands, spoiling and injuring the realm by land and by sea, and native as well as foreign merchants in various ways; but when many nobles of England and Ireland . . . passing over into parts not far distant from the above-mentioned island, had learnt more fully how the said William could not be surprised except by stratagem, they apprised the King that the securing of this malefactor must be effected not by violence but by policy.”

That the island was impregnable to any force which could be brought against it at a cost of forty-seven pounds sixteen shillings is, indeed,

easy to believe. There was only one small strip of beach on which it was possible for the invaders to land, even in fair weather, and then they had to climb a steep cliff by a narrow path on which the defenders could easily bowl them over one by one. But stratagem succeeded, though one does not know exactly how. Presumably William de Marisco was caught, not when he was on the island, but when he was off it. Caught at any rate he was and duly conducted to "that engine of punishment vulgarly called the gibbet"; while his sixteen associates, "after being dragged at the horse-tail throughout the City of London, were hanged at the gallows."

So ends the first chapter in the history of Lundy. The island was confiscated by the Crown. There was a Governor of Lundy Island, just as there are, nowadays, Governors of the Isles of Man and Wight; and there is a report on its conditions and resources, dated in the third year of the reign of Edward I. "In summer," we read, "even in time of peace, it is necessary to have fourteen servants and a constable to watch the defences of the Island, and, in winter, ten servants." And the report goes on to raise the question whether it would not be proper to reduce the wages of the servants on the ground that the island is full of rabbits which they are free to kill and eat.

What action was taken on that report one

does not know; but the rabbits referred to in it reappear in a grant of the island by Edward II to his favourite, Hugh, Lord le Despenser. "There is a rabbit warren there," it is written, "worth in ordinary years one hundred shillings"; and the breeding-ground of the gannets is assessed at three pounds six shillings and eightpence; and there are also said to be "pleas and perquisites of Courts worth yearly four shillings." Evidently the nest of pirates had now become, in its mild way, a hive of industry,—and, apparently, also of commercial litigation.

That Hugh le Despenser ever settled there is unlikely; but he came near to doing so on a memorable occasion. Lundy was proposed as a place of refuge for Edward II, when his barons were pursuing him; and the picture which the chroniclers who tell the story draw of it is that of an earthly Paradise.

"It bringeth forth conies very plentiful. It hath pigeons and other fowls. It ministreth to the inhabitants fresh springing water flowing out of fountains. . . . It aboundeth altogether with victuals, and is very full of wines, oil, honey, corn, bragget, salt fish, flesh, and sea or earth coals."

A pleasant sketch—one can almost fancy oneself reading of Tennyson's "Island Valley of Avilion":

“ Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns,  
And bowery hollows crowned with summer seas,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.”

And truly, if ever a man needed an “ escape from life ” into such a happy valley, the poor weak and frightened Edward II did so. It would not have distressed him, we may be sure, to think that the island was difficult to get away from. He would by no means have been troubled as were the members of that excursion party of Devonshire vicars who are said once to have been detained there by stress of weather, over two Sundays, to the alarm and dismay of their congregations. On the contrary, he would have found great comfort in the reflection that “ it hath only one entrance into it, in the which two men together can scarce go in a front.” He was, in short, the one man in the world to whom even the limitations of Lundy might have been expected to be grateful; its fogs a screen to hide a hunted man, its precipices a rampart, and its gales a defiance to the intruder. He might have grown old there, unmolested and contented, desiring no larger kingdom, revelling and drinking deep.

But it was not to be. The wind rose and raged too soon; the white horses chased each other up the Severn Sea; and Edward II could not get to Lundy. Starting from Chepstow, he was driven ashore in Wales, where the doom which we all know awaited him; and Lundy

fell yet again to the Crown, and was re-assigned, first to Otho de Bodrigan, and afterwards to other men with whose names we need not burden our memories. We read that, in 1337, it was valued at ten pounds a year; but there are indications that the great men to whom it belonged, neglected it. We hardly hear of it again until the time of the Stewarts; and then its reputation is once more an evil one, as a place of refuge for men of Devon of whom it is impossible to be proud:

“In the year 1618” (we read in Howel’s *Familiar Letters*) “Sir Walter Raleigh, seeing the influence of his enemies at Court, had contrived to escape into France, but was betrayed by Sir Lewis Stukely, Vice-Admiral of the Coasts of Devon. The fate of traitors, however, finally awaited Sir Lewis. Well did this faithless, cunning knight, who betrayed Sir W. Raleigh in his intended escape, being come ashore, fall to that contemptible end, as to die a poor distracted beggar in the Isle of Lundy, having for a bag of money falsified his faith.”

Lundy, one surmises, was as little then as now a place to which a man with a bag of money would willingly betake himself in the hope of getting his money’s worth; and, as Sir Lewis Stukely was brought to beggary, the presumption is strong that the Lundy islanders were quick to deprive him of the bag. They were

the sort of people who might be confidently relied upon to do so; for Lundy had once more become a pirates' lair, though whether it actually flew the black flag or not one cannot say.

The details are lost. No notable name like that of Captain Kidd stands out; but one can dig up many scraps of evidence. For instance, in 1608, a Commission sitting at Barnstaple took evidence to the effect that merchants were daily robbed at sea by pirates who took refuge at Lundy; and in 1610 we hear of a piratical Captain Salkeld, who called himself the King of Lundy. In 1625, again, we find the Mayor of Bristol reporting that three Turkish pirates have taken Lundy and threatened to burn Ilfracombe; and these pirates are said to have landed somewhere in Cornwall, on a Sunday, and to have raided a church during the hours of divine service and kidnapped sixty of the worshippers. Then, in 1632, a Captain Nutt—self-styled Admiral Nutt—made Lundy his head-quarters, with the result that several ships-of-war had to be detailed to capture him; and then, in the following year, Lundy was sacked by a Spanish ship, which landed eighty men there, with the result that a special meeting of the Board of Admiralty was called "to consider (*inter alia*) the complaints from the West Country of the outrages committed at Lundy."



So that Lundy was again given a Governor—one Thomas Bushel, who was also engaged in working the Combmartin silver mines. It was one of the last places held for the King in the great Civil War which broke out soon afterwards; and the Governor did not surrender it until the King had given him leave to do so—"with this caution, that you do take example from ourselves, and be not over credulous of vain promises, which hath made us great only in our sufferings, and will not discharge our debts." He came to Clovelly to make submission to the Honoũrable Richard Fiennes, whom he told that he and his men had not tasted bread for six months, or drunk a glass of beer for the last two years. There were twenty-one of them; and Parliament gave them all a free pardon as gallant soldiers. And then, Lundy being left ungarrisoned, the pirates had yet another chance, and took it.

Pirates of various nations, but chiefly French and Dutch. "Some small Flushing privateers which lie skulking under the Island of Lundy have taken six small barques coming from Ireland laden with bullocks, sheep, wool, and tallow," reports the Collector of the Customs at Barnstaple, to My Lords at Whitehall, in June, 1667. "If the Dutch should take the Island," writes a naval officer, a few years later, "it would block up the Severn, and a dozen good men could secure it from the world." At

about the same date, too, there is talk of "French privateers lying at Lundy Island,"—privateers who "took a trow, kept the master, and sent the men ashore at Barnstaple to procure money for the redemption of the vessel and lading, taking out of her a hundred sheep and other provisions for themselves." And even as late as the reign of Queen Anne, we find the same sort of thing still going on, and Barnstaple Bay termed "The Golden Bay" on account of the great number of profitable prizes taken there: a phase of the otherwise glorious wars of Marlborough not often mentioned in our Histories.

That chapter in the annals of Lundy ended, however, with the Peace of Utrecht, and was not to be reopened. The island was never again to be a hostile naval base; but it was still to be the scene of the exploits of that unconscionable rascal, Thomas Benson.

Benson was a Bideford man, of an old Bideford family, elected Member of Parliament for Barnstaple in 1749, and possessed of a fortune of about £40,000. He tried to increase his wealth as a merchant, speculator, and contractor. He was a Government contractor, and one of his contracts was for the exportation of convicts.

The Governments of those days did not look after their contractors very sharply, and were

still more careless as to the disposition of criminals, provided that these were removed to some place in which they could do no mischief. No proper penal settlements were provided. The prisoners were simply handed over to the contractor, who gave his bond to the Sheriff, undertaking to dump them in Virginia or Maryland. But Thomas Benson knew, as the vulgar say, "a trick worth two of that." He obtained a lease of Lundy from Lord Gower, who then owned the island, and, instead of troubling to take his men across the Atlantic, dumped them there instead. And not only dumped them, but employed them in improving his property, and in other ways.

He does not seem to have made any mystery of his proceedings. It is impossible to say whether the Government did not know what he was doing, or only pretended not to know. From his Devonshire friends, at all events, nothing was hidden. They, time and tide permitting, used to visit him on his island; and there still exists a manuscript journal of one of them who tells us what he saw there in July, 1752. The convicts, we read, occupied the old fort, and were "locked up every night when they returned from their labour"; but, notwithstanding these precautions, there were occasional attempts to get away: "About a week before we landed seven or eight of them took the long-boat and made their escape to Hartland,

and were never heard of afterwards." And Benson boasted:

"He talked to us" (writes the Diarist) "about his contract for exportation of convicts to Virginia, and often said that the sending convicts to Lundy was the same as sending them to America; they were transported from England, it matters not where, so long as they were out of the kingdom."

Perhaps he was right, according to the haphazard notions of his time,—the point need not be argued. As long as he merely employed his convicts in building walls, the voice of authority kept silence; but it was another matter when the rumour reached the Exchequer that he was employing them, not as builders, but as smugglers. Then the preventive men were sent to search the Lundy caves, and their search was not without result. They found tobacco in those caves,—far more tobacco than could possibly be required for the consumption of the convicts and the warders,—tobacco which owed, but had not paid, duty to the amount of some £5,000.

That tobacco was seized, and Benson's estate at Napp was also seized; and Benson himself, being convicted at about the same time of scuttling an insured ship after taking the cargo out of the hold and landing it at Lundy, departed in a hurry and sought refuge in Portugal. He is the last inhabitant of the island whom we

need mention by name except Mr. Heaven; and about him there is nothing to be said except that Lundy was his home for many, many years, and was called the Kingdom of Heaven in consequence.

For what reason Mr. Heaven chose to live there, circumscribing his life, avoiding converse with his fellows,—monarch of all he surveyed, indeed, but surveying very little—is his secret, but not a secret which it would be fair to challenge him to tell. Secrets of that sort cannot be told in any language comprehensible to the vulgar,—or, indeed, to anyone who does not already share them. They depend, not upon reason, but upon a mood: a mood which most of us pass through, and then pass away from, but which, in the case of a man here and there, is perpetuated until it becomes an instinct.

One associates the instinct, as a rule, with Eremites,—with misogyny, fanaticism, hair shirts, and interminably long prayers; but there is really nothing inevitable or imperative in that connection of ideas. Certainly one cannot trace it in the circumstances of Mr. Heaven, a married man with daughters, who kept a school for the Lundy children. But life is a problem (though not all of us are conscious of the problem) and each of us must solve it in his own way,—compromising, as best we can, between the tasks of realizing the world about us, and of realizing our own selves and souls.

There are men to whom solitude is the most intolerable of burdens,—who feel that they lose their hold of life unless the sounds of the world are always in their ears and its sights ever before their eyes. There are others who feel that only when they are alone can they transcend their limitations, attain to full self-consciousness, escape from the tyrannical mechanism of appearances, and “live as gods knowing both good and evil.” We need not try to judge between them, or pretend that absolute truth—or absolute right—resides in either point of view. Most of us, in all likelihood, fluctuate between the two points of view,—generally needing the company of our fellows, but now and again needing to escape from their company as from a prison; and assuredly it is only one man in a million who belongs to the former of the two classes perpetually and unreservedly.

But such a man may contrive to spend fifty years on an island only three and a half miles long, and wonder, at the end of the time, why anyone else should wonder at his having contrived to be quite happy there.

## XX

### EXMOOR

Blackmore and the Doones—Had the Doones a real existence?—James Boevey, of Simonsbath

THE actual moor no doubt belongs to Somerset; but the historical moor has undoubtedly stretched far into Devonshire, so that Exmoor may fairly stand at the head of the chapter which is to speak of Richard Blackmore and his Doones.

Blackmore, at any rate, was a Devonian by upbringing and early association, if not by birth. His father held curacies at Culmstock and at Ashford. He himself was a Blundellian—a schoolfellow of Frederick Temple, Bishop of Exeter, who had been his father's pupil; he was head boy when he left for Exeter College, Oxford, where he only won moderate distinction. His affection for the school survived the fact that, as a youngster, he was badly bullied there: so badly, indeed, that his whole career was altered through the consequences of his treatment, as was revealed for the first time by Mr. Stuart J. Reid in the *Dictionary of National Biography*:

"He had a good chance of succeeding at the bar in the special direction which he had chosen, but he suddenly relinquished his profession for reasons which he never explained, and which scarcely any even of his intimate friends suspected. The truth, however, is that he was subject to epilepsy, brought about by the ill-treatment of the big boys at Blundell's."

Let us hope that big boys, not at Blundell's only, but at all schools, will lay that revelation to heart, even though good, for once, came out of evil, and the victim of the tyrants of the playing fields and dormitories, being driven to literature, achieved a greater glory than he would ever have won in the calling originally chosen for him.

Probably it was his damaged health which accounted for Blackmore's retiring and secluded habits. Never, one imagines, was there so great a man of letters whose name was so seldom in the papers. The *Strand Magazine* never caught him for an illustrated interview, and never was able to present him in its gallery of celebrities photographed at various periods of their lives. Nor did one ever see his name in lists of celebrities who had arrived at popular resorts, or hear of him as "the guest of the evening" at the Savage Club or any other literary society. A veritable mystery, increasing with the years, encircled him. One knew that he lived within



the four walls of a garden at Teddington—one hardly knew anything else about him—and no journalist was ever able to make “copy” out of the romance of his early struggles.

He made, as a matter of fact, a romantic marriage in early life; but the marriage necessitated a manner of life of which the circumstances were, for some time, rather depressing. His wife was a Catholic from Jersey, whom he met while staying in the island with a “reading-party” from Oxford; and he kept the marriage secret for some years, for fear of offending his father, who was a stern, unbending Anglican. He and his wife lived in lodgings in North London, which is a horrible way of living; and Blackmore, not yet a novelist, became, at the age of thirty, an assistant master in a private school at Twickenham—a melancholy occupation for a man of genius, and poorly paid. A legacy from an uncle delivered him from it when he was about forty, and he then bought the market garden in which he was to spend the remainder of his life. It was commonly believed that he made a living out of that garden; but, as a matter of fact, he laboriously lost about £250 a year on it. At last, however, he found his *métier*; in 1869, *Lorna Doone* made him famous.

No Devonian needs to be told that Blackmore, in *Lorna Doone*, did for the West Country what Scott, in his Waverley novels, did for the

Scottish Border. Among the many compliments which it received, the one which pleased the author most was that of the Devonian who declared it to be "almost as good as clotted cream"—he was too good a West Countryman, and too fond of clotted cream, to resent the qualifying adverb. It was certainly the greatest novel of the romantic school written since Scott had ceased to write, and most of us West Countrymen, if hard fate compelled us to choose between Scott and Blackmore, would pitch the entire Waverley library into the fire in order to save *Lorna Doone*. And that without reference to the question whether there ever really were any Doones, or whether Blackmore invented them.

He certainly did not invent them,—that fact, at any rate, is clearly demonstrated by Mr. Snell in his interesting *Book of Exmoor*, wherein all that is known or knowable about the Doones is brought together. Mr. Snell heard of the Doones from an aged villager named Huxtable who, in his turn, had heard of them from his mother:

"For fear of the Doones, she told him, farm buildings were arranged in a square, with communication between the different parts, so that it was possible to pass from kitchen to barn, and from stable to shippen, without going out after dark. However, one night, the Doones got

into a farm called Withycombe, in the parish of Challacombe, and killed every one in the house save the mistress, who saved her life by jumping into a large butter chest, big enough to hold five or six people, and full of feathers which she, after plucking her geese, had stored up to make a bed-tick."

And then again:

"Once the Doones visited a house at Challacombe, where they got more than they bargained for. It seems that the inmates, anticipating their arrival, bored a hole through the door, and through the hole, when the robbers came up, a gun was fired at them. The shot took effect, for afterwards blood was traced in the snow as far as Chapman Burrows."

The aged Huxtable had seen the door with the hole in it, and considered that that proved the story to be true. We may take it as proved, at any rate, that the West Country had heard of the Doones long before they were reminded of them by Blackmore's romance. Some further particulars about them are offered by the Rev. W. H. Thornton:

"The old people on Exmoor used to tell me that the last two of the Doone family perished in the snow. Mr. Blackmore has invented a Sir Ensor Doone, but the real author of the family was, I believe, a fugitive private soldier

from Sedgemoor, who only escaped hanging at the hands of Judge Jeffreys to carry on a series of petty depredations from a hovel on Exmoor. Monmouth's rebellion occurred, I think, in 1685, and it must have been in 1800, or about that time, when the last male Doone, emaciated and old, went out with his poor little granddaughter to sing Christmas carols and gather a few pence. They were found together in the snow, quite dead, on the road between Simonsbath and Challacombe, or so I have been informed. . . .

" . . . The Doones, as I have said, were believed by my friends to have originated from a refugee soldier from Sedgemoor. They settled down in a small combe which runs up at right angles from the Badgeworthy Water, just above the old wood, and I have ridden many a time among the foundations of their two or three wretched huts. They increased in numbers during the hundred years or so of their history, and became petty malefactors and a nuisance to the neighbourhood, until the more respectable people united and got rid of them. . . . In 1848 an old farmer showed me an antiquated fowling-piece with which an ancestor of his (so he declared with great satisfaction) had shot a Doone who was prowling about in his farmyard at night, literally seeking, poor beggar, what he might devour. The Doones stole ponies, sheep, and poultry, and were generally a nuisance."

On the other hand, as Mr. Snell relates, there exists a remarkable pamphlet, signed "Ida M. Browne (Audrie Doon)," the author of which tells us that the Doones came from Scotland, and that she herself is of their family. According to her, Sir Ensor Doone, was a real man who, having a grievance against the King, "resolved to forsake the society of his kind." So he went West with his wife, and settled, not far from Oare Ford, in the East Lyn valley:

"Their four sons, as they grew up, developed rather more than their father's misanthropy and cruelty, and became a veritable scourge. Not a traveller was safe from their kind attentions, not a farmer but was forced to contribute to their ways and means; and when Ensor's sons came to marry, the handsomest of the village girls were either abducted or cajoled into becoming their wives."

At last, according to this story, the family, after seventy-three years' residence in the West, suddenly and mysteriously returned to Scotland. It is a circumstantial narrative; but it is difficult not to view it sceptically. The Sedgemoor refugee story is certainly more plausible; and even that story is rejected by Mr. Edward T. MacDermott, the latest of the Exmoor historians. But Mr. MacDermott's argument is not conclusive; and the flaw in it must be pointed out.

A great part of Mr. MacDermott's space is devoted to James Boevey, of London, merchant—"the first owner of Exmoor who was not a king or queen of England." He acquired the freehold of the Forest in 1652, established himself at Simonsbath, and spent most of the rest of his life in litigation with suitors who disputed the validity of his title. We need not trouble about the lawsuits; but we must quote what Mr. MacDermott says about the Doones:

"It was during Boevey's tenancy of Exmoor Forest, covering as it did practically all the second half of the seventeenth century, that the 'Doones,' a legendary band of robbers, are thought by some to have been established in Badgworthy. . . . From what we know of Mr. Boevey, his constant lawsuits and frequent appeals to the law officers of the Crown, it is, to say the least, highly improbable that he would have tolerated for any length of time the existence on his borders of any such nest of thieves, who would certainly have made frequent raids on the forest sheep and cattle. . . . Any considerable amount of sheep-stealing would of course have deterred farmers from sending their flocks to the Moor, and so have lessened his profits, a state of things which Mr. James Boevey would have been the last man to suffer."

That is to say, if there had been any Doones,

James Boevey would have had the law of them; and, as James Boevey cannot be shown to have had the law of them, then there were none. Such is the argument; but the presumption which it establishes does not amount to much. James Boevey died, in his seventy-fourth year, in 1696; and he had then, for some time, abandoned his habit of having the law of people. On the other hand, the date of the activity of the Doones cannot be certainly determined. Blackmore, of course, fixed it at a date which suited him, after the manner of romantic writers; and it is quite likely that they did not make themselves conspicuous until a time when Mr. Boevey's litigious energies were undermined by his advancing years. On the whole, therefore, we will cling to our Doones, and decline to let Mr. MacDermott deprive us of them. But we will also cling to James Boevey, as a new West Countryman discovered for us by Mr. MacDermott.

He was a man of parts; and one finds a good deal about him in a sort of *Who's Who* of the period, which was long preserved in manuscript in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, and finally printed in 1813. It seems that he early enriched himself as a banker, and spoke many languages,—“Low Dutch, High Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish, and Lingua Franca, and Latin”; and he was able to withdraw from business at the age of thirty-two,

when he "retired to a country life by reason of his indisposition, the air of the city not agreeing with him." The place of his retreat, as we have seen, was Simonsbath,—a proof that rural isolation did indeed appeal to him; and his biographer gives a picturesque description of his way of life:

"A person of great temperance and deep thoughts, and a working head never idle. From fourteen he had a candle burning by him all night, with pen, ink, and paper, to write down thoughts as they came into his head; that so he might not lose a thought. . . . From fourteen he began to take notice of all prudential rules as came in his way, and wrote them down, and so continued till this day, September 28, 1680, being now in his fifty-ninth year. For his health, he never had it very well, but indifferently, always a weak stomach, which proceeded from the agitation of the brain. His diet was always fine diet: much chicken."

Truly a queer man, and worth including in our gallery, though only a West Countryman by adoption. His strange habit of keeping his candle burning all night gave rise to legends as to the sources of his wealth. It was whispered that he was a coiner, though there is no real reason to suppose that he was anything of the kind, in spite of the fact that "he paid all his bills in new coin." He was odd and



mysterious, however; and he grew odder and more mysterious as he grew older; and his secretive habits eventually benefited a man whom they were by no means intended to benefit:

“A bricklayer” (we read) “repairing the pavement of the washhouse belonging to his dwelling, found a vault arched over, and in it an iron chest, which he carried away, and told the owner there was nothing in it; but from being a poor man, he soon after bought houses.”

Which was very wrong of the bricklayer, but perhaps served the miser right for withdrawing capital from circulation.

## XXI

### DARTMOOR

The convict prison—The prisoners of war—Their way of life—Their release—Mr. Winston Churchill's "Gentle Shepherd" portrayed by the Prison Governor

PRIMITIVE man appears to have pitched his primitive camp on Dartmoor. Excavations confirm the statements as to his primitive habits contained in Mr. Andrew Lang's well-known Ballade:

" He buried his dead with their toes  
Tucked up—an original plan—  
Till their knees came right under their nose :  
'Twas the manner of primitive man."

For what reason primitive man preferred the bleak site of Grimspound to some sunny combe facing south and sloping to the sea—whether he ever crawled out of his hut and went on a visit to his cousin, the primitive man who had his home in a cave at Torquay: these are questions for antiquaries to fathom. They have already demonstrated that his "remains" are not "druidical"; some day they may discover

what mechanical invention enabled him to build his "clapper bridges." Meanwhile, as he has left no anecdotal reminiscences, we will pass on to speak of men less primitive: the men who have dwelt on Dartmoor, not because they liked the climate and admired the scenery, but because that was where the Government had provided a prison for them. Let the prisoners of war come first.

The Government, in the course of the long wars with Napoleon, was hardly less embarrassed by the number of its prisoners than the Old Woman who lived in a Shoe was with the size of her family. The two war prisons at Norman Cross near Peterborough, and Stapleton near Bristol, were soon full to overflowing. So were the six prison ships maintained at Plymouth. And still they came. There were so many of them—without counting the three thousand or so who were on parole and lived as the paying guests of respectable citizens—that there seemed quite a chance of their revolting, seizing an arsenal, and causing a good deal of trouble before they could be suppressed. A new prison in an out-of-the-way place—the further out of the way the better—was necessary.

Dartmoor was sufficiently remote. Mr. Tyrwhitt, Member for Plymouth, and Lord-Warden of the Stannaries, had an axe to grind and a site to dispose of. Many sites were examined; but he had influence enough to persuade the

inspectors that his site was the best. It was chosen; tenders were invited; the prison was built; by the end of June, 1809, there were five thousand prisoners within its walls, guarded by five hundred militiamen.

The prisoners, however, not being convicts, could not be treated as convicts. If they could have been, there would have been no story to tell; for where there is discipline, there is no incident and no variety. As it was, they enjoyed liberty within limits, and so lived the most amazing life of any prisoners in modern times, forming as it were an *imperium in imperio*—a little French Republic in the very heart of the British Empire.

But not a Republic in which equality and fraternity prevailed any more than liberty. Even in a society in which all men start equal, some men soon rise to the top while others sink to the bottom; and in this little Dartmoor Republic, they did not even start equal. There was an aristocratic department known officially as the Petty Officers' Prison, and styled by the prisoners themselves *le petit cautionnement*, or the Little Parole. Not all the officers confined in it were really petty. One of them was a general,—albeit only a negro general who had been refused his release on parole on account of the colour of his face. Others were officers of various grades who had been given their parole and had forfeited it. There were also among

them lawyers, doctors, merchants, actors, musicians, and artists, who had money in the bank, and cheque-books in their pockets. They lived in some comfort, hiring the other prisoners to wait on them; and their principal trouble was that they did not like the prison cooking.

In particular they did not like it on the day on which there were rats in the soup,—not two or three rats only, but, on a rough estimate, about a hundred. It is small wonder that, as rat after rat was fished up from the depths of the mess of pottage, they looked about for a suitable weapon with which to kill the cook; and it was fortunate for the cook that he had time to explain before a weapon had been selected for the purpose. He had prepared the soup the night before, but had forgotten to put the covers on the coppers. The rats had entered the coppers in the dark, seeking what they might devour; and the cook had boiled them unawares, and served them in ignorance.

He was forgiven; and, for the rest, the prisoners, having no particular quarrel with their gaolers, quarrelled among themselves, and challenged each other to duels. They had no pistols, of course, and no swords; but they managed to improvise swords by mounting compass-legs, scissor-blades, and even razor-blades, on wooden handles with guards for the hands. The encounters were conducted with all the punctilios of the field of honour; and the authorities raised

no objection. The only people who did object were the members of the Coroner's juries who had to sit on the victims when the encounters ended fatally. They struck for higher pay; but when the Admiralty raised the fee from eightpence to a shilling, they were so well satisfied that they proceeded to encourage the combatants by returning verdicts of "homicide by accident." The only recorded case in which punishment was inflicted was one in which there was a suspicion of foul play; and even then, the culprit, though convicted of manslaughter, was let off with six months' imprisonment.

So much for the upper circles of the imprisoned community; but there were well-defined grades of society in the lower circles also. The five recognized classes were:

"Les Lords": the men of means who tried to live like gentlemen, if not like fighting-cocks.

"Les Labourers": artificers, more or less skilled, who increased their allowances by manufacturing and selling small articles of commerce.

"Les Indifférents": the loafers.

"Les Minables": the gamblers and mischief-makers.

"Les Romains": who may perhaps be described as "the scum."

Les Romains—let us drop pedantry and say the Romans—lived in the cockloft, which was

called The Capitol. Whether they were called Romans because they lived in the Capitol, or whether the Capitol was so named because Romans lived in it, is uncertain, and does not matter. The thing to note about them is that they were gamblers whose lives illustrated the truth of the famous saying that the great harm in gambling consists in losing.

They began by staking their money. When they had lost their money, they staked their bedding. When they had lost their bedding, they staked their clothes; and when their clothes were gone, they staked their rations. Being thus reduced to nudity, save for filthy rags which girt their loins, they were voted unfit for the companionship of the civilized, and were told to go up to the cockloft and stay there. They slept there—about five hundred of them—practically naked on the concrete floor, packed almost as closely as sardines in a tin, commanded by a "General" of their own choice, holding all their property (if any man brought any property) in common. A few blankets, cut into ponchos, were kept as part of the common stock for the use of any member of the community whom urgent business required to descend into the yard.

Their constantly recurring problem was: how to feed themselves, after they had staked and lost, or hypothecated, their rations of soup. To that end they foraged in heaps of offal for

potato peelings, fish-heads, rotten vegetables, et cetera; and they were also known to eat those rats at which we have seen the aristocracy of the prison turning up its nose; and they once incurred punishment by raiding the prison bakery; and there is a horrible story of their having hacked horses to death with their knives, and eaten the raw flesh.

It is an amazing picture; but the most amazing of all the facts connected with the Romans are these. Though the prison was swept with epidemics of measles, smallpox, and typhus, their Capitol enjoyed immunity from infection; and though their "way of life" was the most bestial of which there is any recent record, a considerable number of young men of good family and polite breeding were included in their ranks: a point which must be illustrated by a striking story taken from Mr. Basil Thomson's *Short History of Dartmoor Prison*:

"In the year 1829 an officer who had been in Dartmoor on forfeiture of parole, attended Mass in a village in Picardy, through which he happened to be passing. The curé preached an eloquent and spiritual sermon, a little above the heads of his rural congregation. One of his auditors was strangely moved, not by the matter of the sermon, but by vague reminiscences, gradually growing clearer, evoked by the features and gestures of the preacher. So certain



did he feel that he had last seen this suave and reverend priest raking an offal heap in the garb of Adam that he knocked at the sacristy door after the service. The curé received him formally with the 'to-what-do-I-owe-the-honour' manner. 'Were you not once a prisoner at the depot at Dartmoor?' The priest flushed to his tonsure and stammered, but at last faltered an affirmative, adding sadly that imprisonment was very harmful both to body and soul.

" 'Do you remember me?' the officer asked.

" 'Of course I do. It was you who so often preached good morals to me. It is a long time ago, and, as you see, God has worked a miracle in my soul. Evil example and a kind of fatal attraction towards vice dragged me down: I was young then. But do not let us talk of that horrible time, which I look upon as an incurable wound in my life.' "

How these Romans, steadily increasing in numbers, tried to terrorize and rob the other prisoners: how some of them were seized, and forcibly scrubbed in the bath-house, and given decent clothes and compelled to put them on; how they had no sooner got the clothes than they staked them at the gaming-table and lost them: all these things may be read in Mr. Basil Thomson's pages. We must leave them and glance at the lives of the other prisoners.

They were a self-contained community, not,

as we have seen, without money, of varied accomplishments, and all social conditions; and they "put in the time" according to their several tastes. There were those among them who plaited straw bonnets and hair watchguards; those who carved and rigged model ships; those who played quoits and a kind of fives; those who set up booths for the sale of their merchandise; those who gave lessons in dancing, singing, and fencing; those who organized amateur theatricals. There were even those who forged bank-notes; and of course there were also those who planned ways of escape.

The *Parcere subjectis* inscribed over the prison portals was supposed by the turnkeys of old time to be an Italian motto, meaning: "If once you get in here you won't get out again in a hurry." None the less there was a way of getting out, and that was a fixed tariff for those who cared to face the risk of guiding those who took it. A sentry would look the other way for so much: a yokel would guide the fugitive across the moor for so much. On the other hand, of course, there were rewards for those who recaptured fugitives; and a good deal of money changed hands in these various connections. The best story is of a Jewish pedlar who mistook a local farmer for an escaped prisoner, and insisted upon taking him to Princetown. The farmer, happening to have business in

Princetown, accompanied the Hebrew with a smiling face, and then, having been identified by a member of the prison staff, compelled his custodian to pay him five pounds as damages for wrongful arrest.

He was arrested, of course, in mistake, not for a Frenchman, but for an American; and it was precisely the Americans, captured in the war waged over the right of search, whose efforts to escape caused the greatest trouble. They were determined to get away, not as single spies but in a complete battalion. To that end, they swore oaths on Bibles to put to death any traitor who betrayed their plans, and then proceeded to dig holes in the floors of their various dormitories and tunnel under the prison walls.

There were three holes and three tunnels. They were to be 250 feet long, with shafts 20 feet deep. The earth was to be disposed of by being thrown, a handful at a time, into the open conduit which carried off the prison sewage. The purpose of having three tunnels was that, if one were by any accident discovered, the suspicions of the authorities might be lulled by the belief that they knew everything, and the work in the others might be pushed ahead unnoticed, under their very noses. Their plan was to break out of all three tunnels simultaneously on a dark and stormy night, make for Torbay, seize fishing-smacks, and set sail for France.

Seeing that there were several hundreds of

them, and that they were sailors, and that there was no naval station in Torbay, and that there was, in those days, neither steam navigation nor electric telegraph, the scheme was sound, and success might reasonably be hoped for. Though one of the tunnels was, in fact, discovered, the work at the others was not interrupted. But then the gaff, as they themselves would have said, was blown. A certain Bagley, of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, walked up to one of the turnkeys in broad daylight in the prison yard, and told him what was going on. The turnkey took him to the Governor's house. The Governor, knowing that his life would not be safe if his fellow-prisoners got hold of him, released him and gave him a passport. The conspirators were removed to other dormitories, and informed that they would be placed for ten days on two-thirds rations in order to pay for the damage which they had done to the prison buildings.

It was a mild punishment; but the prison discipline was allowed to be loose, and there are many stories which illustrate the difficulties which the authorities had in keeping order. On one occasion a man who had been confined in the dark cell succeeded in making his escape at the hour when he was taken out for exercise. Nothing, one would suppose, should have been easier than to follow him, catch him, and lock him up again. But not at all. The refugee

effected a mysterious disappearance. Though all the prisoners were paraded, the lost man could not be recognized. His friends had smeared his face with soot and passed him off as a nigger.

At last came peace and freedom; and then a strange thing happened. The English soldiers who escorted the American sailors to the coast fraternized with them. Prisoners and escort exchanged hospitality in all the public-houses that they passed on the road; and though they drank equally, it was the prisoners who carried their liquor best. In the end they were carrying, not only their liquor, but also the arms and accoutrements of their friend the enemy, and telling their friend the enemy how much they had rejoiced in the victories of the British fleet over the French. As they reeled into Plymouth, the citizens of Plymouth entered into the spirit of the thing, and crowded round them to shake their hands and tell them what jolly good fellows they were.

The story shows, of course, as nothing else could, the absurdity of that little war with the United States; while the whole picture which we have drawn of prison life is an object-lesson, not only in the absurdity, but also in the horror of war. In some respects, indeed, it is an even more striking lesson than the shocking spectacle of the stricken field. There is no glory, no heroism, no self-sacrifice for a great

cause to redeem it. It is merely a spectacle of wasted years carved out of precious lives which might have been useful, and of human degradation in circumstances which tend to bring out all that is most ignoble in human nature. One turns one's back on it with relief.

Emptied of its prisoners of war, Dartmoor prison stood empty for many years. A proposal to turn it into an asylum for educating London orphan children "under a system of religious, moral, and industrial training to reclaim them from the habits of vice and immorality" came to nothing. The British Patent Naphtha Company took a lease of the premises in 1847, but soon went bankrupt. The building was transformed into a Convict Prison in 1850.

Convicts, however, are not the men of Devon to whose careers this work is devoted. Devon is only their adopted county, and they have only adopted it under compulsion. Nothing shall be said, therefore, even of such illustrious convicts as Michael Davitt and the Tichborne claimant, though the latter had to be hidden away at his work because of the crowds of tourists who turned up, trying to catch a glimpse of him. But one may perhaps pause to mention the case of that Dartmoor Shepherd whose case lately melted the heart of Mr. Winston Churchill to tenderness because he had received such long

sentences for stealing such very small sums of money.

Argument as to the wisdom of Mr. Churchill's clemency may be dispensed with; but the portrait of the object of it, drawn by the prison Governor may be welcome:

“ Much of the success of the present flock of sheep is due to the care with which the old shepherd has nursed them through four terms of penal servitude. As the day approached for one of his occasional absences from prison he would say to the warder regretfully, ‘ I hope, sir, that they will look after this ewe until I come back: I shall not be long away.’ This did not mean that he preferred imprisonment to freedom, but that, knowing his own foibles, he was speaking of the probabilities of the case. He was the only English shepherd I knew whose sheep followed him in Oriental fashion, and sometimes when a lamb had broken away and refused to be driven by the dogs, I have seen him come down from the farm and bring it in by calling it by name. This old man, as far as one could see, possessed a full measure of the Christian virtues. His only fault was the habit of breaking into houses when he got past the bounds of strict sobriety. His numerous friends and admirers felt at last that a supreme effort should be made to change his mode of life. His only surviving relation, a married

sister living in Texas, was traced, and through the generosity of a benefactor all arrangements were made for sending him out to her; but an unexpected difficulty in the shape of the Immigration Laws of the United States caused delay, and while negotiations were in progress I regret to relate that he broke into a church and was rearrested. No man could have been more pathetically anxious to lead a new life than he was on the day before his release, and the only consoling thought in the story is the joy that he and his prison sheep must have felt on being reunited."

Even in a prison, it seems—though Marcus Aurelius wrote "even in a palace"—lives may be lived well; and some people are appreciably helped in so living them by the wise restrictions of the prison rules.



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